

Community Advisory Board
October 5, 2009

Attendees

Carlyse Giddins	Mitchell Rock
Rick Shaw	Leslie Newman
Aimee McFarlan	Terry Senio
Kim Pepper	Kim Slocomb
Alison McGonigal	Susan Burns
Rosemary Szczechowski	Lisa DiStefano
Julia Pearce	Stephanie Guiswite
Angela Stancil	Larry Haas
Ellie Benson	

The meeting began at 2:35 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Minutes approved from the June 1, 2009 meeting were approved.

Aimee announced that the December 8th meeting time has been changed to 10:00 a.m. The 2010 meeting schedule was distributed.

Child Placement Review Board Presentation

Julie Pearce from the Child Placement Review Board (CPRB) presented on the organization and how it serves DYRS youth. The CPRB was established to further the best interests of children who are in the care and custody of a placement agency through the intervention of the state, whether that intervention takes the form of foster care or adjudication under the Family Court system. They are an independent, citizen-based agency that has established Review Committees in each of Delaware's three counties. The Review Committees bring citizens of diverse backgrounds and perspectives to focus on the needs of individual children. Through the mechanism of regular, independent reviews, the State of Delaware seeks to foster permanency and emphasize provision of necessary services, education, and preparation for independent living. The mission of the CPRB, a voluntary, citizen-based organization, is to advocate on behalf of Delaware's children in out-of-home placements and to identify, address, and resolve systemic barriers to the achievement of timely permanency for these children.

In 1999, CPRB began reviewing DYRS youth. The purpose is for safety and appropriateness of the placement, appropriateness of the treatment objectives for the youth, youth's progress and commitment to the treatment goals, and

review and assessment of the plan for reentry into the community. After a review is completed, the Board provides the probation officer with a report, which includes recommendations. If there are any disagreements with the recommendations, a review is completed by the Executive Board to determine next steps.

Ms. Pearce also discussed the Ivyane D.F. Davis Memorial Scholarship, which provides scholarships for post-secondary education to Delaware residents who have been in foster care in this State. This scholarship fund addresses the particular financial needs of many children who have been in foster care and offers them the opportunity for higher education. The award recipients are selected by the CPRB. More information is available at <http://courts.delaware.gov/cprb>.

Feedback Reports – Secure Care Review

Carlyse discussed the Secure Care reviews. We conduct internal reviews for Level IV and Level V to look at how we can strengthen our programs and create better outcomes for our youth. In addition to YRS staff, the team consisted of professionals from mental health, medical, and education. All YRS Level 5 secure care facilities will go through the American Correctional Association (ACA) accreditation next year. This internal review will help prepare us for our ACA audits. So far, NCCDC, Grace Cottage, and Snowden Cottage have been completed. Ferris and Mowlds are being reviewed today. Each review will provide an assessment report with recommendations and the facility administrator will be responsible for an improvement plan.

JJC Update and Conference

Alison McGonigal provided a Juvenile Justice Collaborative update. There are currently three active subcommittees: Restructuring Community Services, Superior Court, and Legislative. The Superior Court subcommittee is focusing on improving the timeliness of juvenile cases being processed and ensuring that youth are receiving services in the YCOP program. The Legislative subcommittee is working on focusing on 10 Del Code § 1007, which focuses on when a child can be lawfully detained.

The Gun Court pilot was implemented in NCC but has now been expanded to all counties. Chief Judge Kuhn is hearing all the Gun Court cases statewide. The purpose is to expedite case processing of cases involving guns. It has been successful. The cases are flagged at the bail hearings. AG's and PD's office participate to look at the entire case to determine if it was actually a weapon and if the case can stay in Family Court. They also meet with the family and youth. Review hearings are scheduled at 30 and 60 days. This pilot has had an impact on YRS because we are receiving more mandatory sentences and more youth are going into long-term placement.

Alison McGonigal and Mitch Rock attended the Annual JDAI Inter-Site Conference in Washington, DC from August 5th to 7th, along with Dawn Williams from the Public Defender's office and Family Court Chief Judge Chandlee Kuhn. The conference allows jurisdictions engaged in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative an opportunity to network and share the challenges and successes of juvenile justice system reform with colleagues from across the country. This year's conference focused on the progress of the national JDAI project, the impact of policies on Latino youth, and how to engage the federal government in juvenile justice reform efforts. Workshops highlighted initiatives that are being implemented in JDAI sites that are in line with the current efforts of our Juvenile Justice Collaborative including community and family engagement, positive youth development, collaboration with schools regarding school discipline, and the drafting of legislation to ensure sustainability of reforms. We are anxious and excited to move forward with incorporating some of these ideas into our action plans as we strive to become a model state for juvenile system reform.

Division Update

Carlyse announced that Delaware received two stimulus grants for mentoring. These two grants will target juvenile justice youth. The first grant was received by Big Brothers Big Sisters, Delaware Center for Justice and YMCA. The second grant was awarded nationally and the Goodwill received \$19 million. Delaware will receive \$286,000 for two years to serve 100 youth. Carlyse will be meeting with these organizations to develop the referral process. These youth need positive adults to help them change their life of crime. This is a huge win for Delaware. As we look at reentry, this will help build better structure for those youth.

Carlyse reported that we are still approved to fill secure care vacancies. However, we cannot fill probation vacancies. Currently, there are 17 vacancies in Community Services (10 FTEs and 7 casual seasonals). There are 98 staff assigned to Community Services of which 56 are probation officers. The caseloads in NCC are averaging about 25-30 per probation officer but in K/S the caseloads are between 45 and 50 per probation officer. Our staff are committed but it comes to how successfully we can meet the needs of our youth. The contact standards vary based on the client's probation level.

The July data showed 1568 cases for Level 2 – 100 were technically Level 3 but had to bump down. Leslie Newman asked if the Department was at risk of not fulfilling its obligation and can the CAB help. Carlyse said that the Administration has been very supportive of our Department. Her goal is to keep our staff with jobs. She said we are not pulling back on youth who need higher levels of supervision. For lower level youth, we are making the decision on a case-by-case basis.

YRS completes internal reviews. Our goal for Community Services is public safety. On average, 80% of youth on Level 2 never return to the system. We need to better identify the other 20% and focus on them by providing appropriate treatment. The Governor wants us to be more efficient in our business processes which is why we are looking at restructuring Community Services.

We are in the planning stage for FY11 budget. There are no new funds. It is important that we look at all we do. We will not be getting door openers unless it comes out of existing funds.

YRS staff are doing a great job assessing youth needs and service delivery. Right now, we do have a surplus but that can change overnight. Carlyse reviews the data monthly. We assessed length of stay and reviewed literature. It shows residential placements are not the best choice for youth. Sometimes longer placements have worse outcomes. YRS, Court staff, and our service providers participated in extensive training for inappropriate sexual behaviors. We are zoning in on recidivism and the ISB youth recidivism is low. We are managing by data and getting good outcomes.

Training is our agency's focus. The DSCYF Directors, who were joined by department staff from each Division, attended the Blueprint for Change conference sponsored by the Family Court of Delaware's Court Improvement Program. The conference presenters, Kathleen McNaught, J.D. from the American Bar Association, and Maura McInerney, ESQ. from ABA's Education Law Center in PA, facilitated the training. Focus included stability and continuity in school enrollment and attendance, and advocating for students participating in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Process. YRS had the most staff in attendance. Training is ongoing with our staff and will help gain better outcomes from youth.

The JJC's Community Services Programs subcommittee has been meeting since March. All the key stakeholders are participating. The group reviewed the current model and assessed how we could restructure with better outcomes and more community based programming. The plan is supported by JJC and the Office of the Governor.

On average, Level 2 is the majority of our youth we serve on probation. There are close to 1600 youth on Level 2. We are looking at ensuring family engagement and individual needs. We need to work with the families in the very beginning and support them. We want to deliver better services to Level 2 youth. We need a needs and risk assessment.

Youth on Level 3 are receiving duplicate services. We are looking at how we can eliminate the duplication between YRS and our contracted providers. We are also assessing how we can collaborate with system providers to share accountability and provide services at a county level and the City of Wilmington.

YRS spends the most money on Level 4 and Level 5. These youth require the most intensive services. Our goal is to keep them out of the Department of Correction.

We need to focus on the pipeline to school. Many educators today need social workers in their schools.

Our next steps are to zone in on the details. We have our model and we will be moving forward. We will also actively pursue funding. There are parking lot issues that may need legislative changes as we begin to restructure. This restructuring will take the next three years or more.

Carlyse believes that when we are finished with this restructuring, we will be a national model. No one state has figured it out but there are pockets of excellence across the country.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Next meeting is December 8th at 10:00 a.m.

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