

Connecticut Juvenile Training School
Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes, 2/24/14

Present: Karl Alston, Deputy Director, CSSD; Abby Anderson, Executive Director, Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance; Francis Carino, Supervising Assistant State's Attorney; James Connolly, Esq., Supervisory Assistant Public Defender; John DiPilla, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Robert Francis, RYASAP/Catalyst for Community Change; Lisa Hofferth, CJTS Quality Assurance Manager; Kristy Ramsey, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Christine Rapillo, Director of Juvenile Delinquency Defense and Child Protection, Public Defender's Office; William Rosenbeck, CJTS Superintendent; Ann Smith, JD, MBA, Executive Director, AFCAMP

Guests: Gene Marchand, DCF Ombudsman, Ken Mysogland, Director, Office of the Ombudsman

The meeting began with introductions. Atty. Connolly welcomed the new members and thanked them for accepting the invitation to join the board. Christine Whidden sent an e-mail stating she is unable to attend today's meeting. Atty. Connolly acknowledged that with the members present we have a quorum.

Minutes - 1/22/14

Atty. Carino made a number of edits to the minutes and they are being accepted as amended.

Board Membership

One issue that has been discussed for a few meetings is the possibility and a strong desire to have an ex-resident on the board. Atty. Connolly had a young man identified and ready to attend this meeting, however, as there are some concerns raised about this young man, a decision was made to have them cleared up before we get him involved. It will take a few days to conduct interviews. Atty. Connolly will talk with him about joining the next meeting.

Legislative Report

The last page of the report has the board recommendations. It is brief with only four items. One is expanding the membership to include former residents and we will continue to pursue that. The second item is to review policies and procedures. The third is to expand recreational and vocational opportunities and the fourth is to identify a definition of recidivism.

The Georgetown Report will be made public and Mr. Rosenbeck may be able to e-mail it to the members. The report outlines what we need to do around juvenile services and how to frame the work a little differently. One of the issues identified is that there really is no data to work with. John Beazoglou will be our representative working with CSSD on the assessment tool and that work has already begun. It also addresses taking a more of a case work model rather than a correctional model. Ms. Anderson stated that HB 5040 talks about recidivism and the sharing of information between the two branches. For example, if a youth is rearrested and on parole, DCF doesn't have access to that information. Tom DeMatteo of our Legal Department is working on the MOU to get that information from CSSD. Currently, CSSD tracks re-arrests but not convictions, however, many arrests do not result in convictions. Ms. Anderson shared that she had this conversation with Commissioner Katz and suggests that we measure both.

Mr. Rosenbeck acknowledged and thanked Dr. Bond for the Clinical section, John Mattera for the Educational section, Christine Martinez for the Rehabilitation / Recreation for section and Lisa Hofferth for the data section and working collaboratively with the managers to ensure we had an accurate and timely report. Atty. Connolly suggested that it might be more beneficial to present recommendations to the Commissioner as issues arise, or on a quarterly basis rather than wait until the end of the year. We can keep track of those recommendations as they arise and report on them at the end of the year.

By-Laws

It is being recommended that we hold off on amending the by-laws until a larger group is assembled. One of the recommendations is the frequency of this meeting and at this point Atty. Connolly suggests monthly meetings but not more than 10 per year as summer months may be challenging with vacations. Special meetings can always be called by Mr. Rosenbeck and Atty. Connolly. If members have any other comments or concerns regarding the by-laws, Atty. Connolly asks they be sent to him.

Mr. Rosenbeck reported that upon consultation with the Legal Department and the Commissioner, we do not need to create another category for board members. The understanding is that board members are professionals, would not use information inappropriately and they would be responsible if they were to use information inappropriately. With that decision, Mr. Rosenbeck will approach Sam Gray and Atty. Connolly will contact Melissa Pelletier. Ms. Smith suggested that a "Conflict of Interest Statement" may be prepared that members can sign off on. Atty. Rapillo will get a copy of one that we can adjust to our needs. According to the current by-laws the Commissioner can appoint five DCF representatives for this board who would be non voting members and she has not yet made that decision. As the by-laws are being revised we may be able to change that number as necessary.

Grievance Procedure

As there are some concerns around the grievance process, Messrs Marchand and Mysogland were invited to participate in the discussion. Atty. Connolly reported that at a recent Student Council meeting the discussion shifted from living units to residents feeling mistreated by staff. They feel the grievance process is ineffective, they often do not know what the disposition is, feel there will be retaliation and overall there is confusion around the process. At the last Board meeting Mr. Alston provided a lot of information of how CSSD handles their grievances. They have a full time outside contractor who is not a state employee and has no relationship with CSSD handle their grievances. He meets with Mr. Alston once a week to review them; however, the serious ones are reported to him immediately. He works closely with each facility administrator. There are a few steps before one submits a grievance. One is a request form and 90% of the time they are handled at the request level as most of the time the kids just want to be heard. If not resolved there it goes to step one grievance process and the facility superintendent gets involved. If no resolution there, then it is brought to Mr. Alston's attention. As long as Mr. Alston has been in his current position, none have come to him for resolution. The Ombudsman does mediation with staff, kids and supervisors. Mr. Alston shared the CSSD Ombudsman policy with the group. Each time the Ombudsman visits a facility he meets with 5 clients and completes a satisfaction survey which asks if they are being treated fairly, if school is challenging enough, and if they like the food. There are seven facilities and he visits each one twice a week, more if necessary. The grievances are addressed in a 24 hour timeframe as the average length of stay is 14 days. He generates a monthly report.

Messrs Marchand and Mysogland are new to this role and are using the system of the former Ombudsman until they find something needs improving. As Mr. Marchand is currently juggling a few assignments, he comes to CJTS once a week where he collects the complaints and tries to engage with staff and residents. He is interested in attending a future Student Council meeting to have an opportunity to discuss with the boys the grievance process. He reviews the grievances and forwards those to the appropriate manager for follow up. If there are still questions or concerns once the manager reviewed the grievance, he then forwards it onto Mr. Rosenbeck and Mr. DiPilla. He is always looking for trends and patterns. There were a lot of grievances around the temperatures at night as some did not know that blankets were available. Last quarter there were a lot of grievances around not enough snacks. Before Mr. Marchand closes out the grievance he makes sure the supervisors speaks with the youth. Oftentimes a grievance may need to go to HR or Affirmative Action and they conduct the interviews. They need to get permission from guardians to conduct their investigation; thereby they know the grievance is being addressed. We use a "has merit" and "does not have merit" system. Staff may be pulled off the unit during the investigation process. It was suggested that Mr. Marchand increase his presence at

CJTS, be a regular member of the Student Council and assign a person to discuss the grievance with the youth upon completion. With regards to the food related grievances, DRC Henry has made it a point to be in the cafeteria during meal time where she talks with the kids about their meal choices and counts how many meals and / or alternate meals are being consumed.

Girl's Unit Update

The construction is in full swing and the contractor assures us that they will be done by 3/14. The hope is to have 2 days to prepare the unit with posters, sheets, comforters, etc. and accept admissions on 3/19/14. The staff are on week three of training which consists of SCM, Girls Circle, Suicide Prevention, Medical Issues and Security. We plan on having an open house on 3/20/14. We will not be admitting new commitments but girls who are already committed. Journey House will continue to take in new commitments.

CJTS Update

- ❖ The construction of the new school is progressing on schedule. There is a lot of shuffling of units going on during the construction phase of an operational facility. Once the school is completed it will be a very good addition to the facility.
- ❖ Our current census is 141 with about 6 boys on parole alerts so we may get them at any time. We had 4 admissions on Friday.
- ❖ Ms. Anderson stated that admissions from New Haven is much higher than from other areas and asked if this data is being tracked and are we missing any programs in that area. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that the regions track their data and we look at the strongest regions to see if we can replicate that in the weaker ones. This data is discussed at monthly meetings with the Commissioner.
- ❖ Atty. Connolly informed the group that there is a resident at CJTS that the Department wants to move to DOC whom he represents. We will see how the court will decide.
- ❖ The next Student Council meeting is on 3/18/14 at 1:15 p.m.

Next Meeting

- ❖ 3/17/14 at 3:00 p.m. at the Girls Unit for a tour and a brief meeting following.
- ❖ Meet on the 4th Monday of the month on a regular basis at 3:00 p.m. at CJTS.
 - 4/28/14
 - 5/26/14
 - 6/23/14
 - 7/28/14
 - 8/25/14

Minutes respectfully submitted by Irene Yanaros