



Governor Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg  
San Wong, Director

## JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT SUBCOMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING GOOGLE MEET May 26, 2021

**Present:** LaTasha DeLoach, Interim Chair; Whitney Buchanan; Julie Clark-Albrecht; Diamond Denney; Stephanie Hernandez; Hon. Kevin McKeever; Stephan Pearson; Chris Wyatt

**Others:** Bernie Bordignon; Ana Clymer; Patrick Garcia; Ed Huff; Jennifer Tibbetts

**Staff:** Steve Michael; Jill Padgett; Scott Musel; Kathy Nesteby; Kayla Powell; Julie Rinker; Nixson Benitez; Brianna Deason

#### Welcome and introductions

LaTasha DeLoach, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. A quorum was present. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing concerns, the meeting was held virtually via Google Meet.

#### Approval of minutes

**Chris Wyatt moved to approve the minutes from the February meeting, seconded by Stephan Pearson. The motion was unanimously approved.**

#### CJJP Update

- Congressional delegation meetings
- Legislative session updates
- JJAC three year plan

Steve Michael, CJJP Division Administrator, reported the following:

- Meetings are being held with representatives of Iowa's federal delegation. These meetings include Michael, Andrew Allen (JJAC Chair), DeLoach, and Jennifer Tibbetts (Chair, Iowa Task Force for Young Women). Documents are being shared that relate to the JJAC's three-year plan, support needed for Title II/Formula grant, a discretionary grant to reduce risk for girls, and the [Racial Disparities report](#). Requests are being made to provide a letter of support for the discretionary grant.
- **Legislative Session**—This year's session has ended. SF357 has passed and keeps Iowa in compliance with the federal JJDP Act regarding housing youth waived to adult court in detention centers unless special requirements are met and approved by a district court judge.

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- **JJAC Three-year plan**—During the March 17 JJAC meeting, part of the DMC plan was not adopted by the full Council due to language to eliminate placement of youth in juvenile detention for probation violations. CJP and DHR will continue to focus on improving the juvenile justice system and there are needs around this issue that must be improved, including alternatives to detention. While that portion won't be part of the JJAC's three-year plan, it is still part of our work and we will continue to educate on disparity and alternatives to detention.

McKeever asked if any feedback was provided during the meeting. Michael responded that there were concerns of unintended consequences where youth could receive additional charges instead of a short duration in detention and that if detention was not an alternative, youth could be placed outside the home. Additionally, the court should have an alternative for youth.

The following was discussed:

- Patrick Garcia agreed and added that members expressed that there weren't other options outside of detention and that detention was used as a treatment component. He suggested reviewing funding streams to develop alternatives.
- LaTasha DeLoach noted that detention is not provided for treatment. She stated that it was communicated during that meeting, that the DMC Subcommittee stood firm and in the end, it basically related to removing power and discretion from judges. She underscored the need for more alternatives and disappointment that the information will not be included in the federal grant application.
- Jill Padgett concurred and stated concerns mostly related to interpreting the recommendation as seeking to change Iowa Code. She added that alternatives to detention will continue to be explored and education will be provided on best practices for youth.
- McKeever understood that having limited or no ability of placing youth in detention for probation violations was key to the decision. However, he noted the importance of changing perspectives and the need for further training/education because the data show detention for probation violations has not worked.
- Garcia concurred that concerns surrounded system change. Over the past few decades, the thought was that removing youth from a bad environment was good practice. However, it may be more successful to provide supports to a youth or their family so they can flourish in that environment.
- DeLoach added that most, if not all, members voted. She noted the importance of significant education on national research and philosophy and finding alternatives to detention. Locking up youth hasn't solved the problem. She was confident that the DMC Subcommittee put their best foot forward. For future meetings, the DMC goals and objectives will be on the reverse side of the agenda.

- **Mitigating Racial and Gender Bias Training**--This training will be held June 24-25 and is free to DMC Subcommittee members. Seats are limited. If interested, contact Julie Rinker.
- **Youth Justice Advisory Subcommittee**--The JJAC approved the addition of this subcommittee at its March meeting. Nixon Benitez and Brianna Deason, AmeriCorps staff and former Youth Action Squad members, will be working with Kayla Powell to recruit and seat youth members.
- **Delinquency Prevention Grant**--CJJP is applying for a federal, five-year grant to focus on pre-charge diversion. Preliminary meetings have been held with Chief Juvenile Court Officers. Civil citations have been suggested that require a youth to enroll into services.
- **Cultural Equity Alliance (CEA) Update**

Julie Clark-Albrecht, DHS Bureau of Child Welfare and Community Services, and Ana Clymer, Iowa State University Cultural Equity Initiatives, presented information on the Cultural Equity Alliance. They noted how their work intersects with this subcommittee. They reported the following:

- There are approximately 50 “Community Partnerships for Protecting Children” (CPPC) throughout Iowa. The work is conducted through local county decats to help families.
- A variety of community stakeholders meet to network and develop strategies to provide supports, services, and resources to families whose children are at risk of abuse and/or neglect, and to reduce barriers and increase accessibility through policies and practices.
- Local work includes engaging youth and families, providing language assistance, services, and supports.
- Training to eliminate cultural barriers and racism is provided to local teams and statewide learning sessions.
- The mission is “To create an antiracist and culturally responsive child welfare system through growth of an equity focused workforce, cross sector collaboration, and policy and practice reform to address disproportionality and disparity in Iowa’s child welfare system.”
- A statewide steering committee comprise a variety of state agencies, university staff, and advocates whose focus is child welfare and justice. These members provide oversight and guidance to the program and make recommendations. Over the past year, a variety of strategies and outcome measures have been implemented. She noted the importance of diverse staff that reflect the community.
- Statewide equity teams oversee youth mentorships, help families navigate systems and establish a foundation to expand cultural awareness and cultural equity resources.
- The Breakthrough Series Collaborative is a leadership team whose priorities are to identify priorities, make recommendations, and provide statewide engagement.
- Data collected measures disparity at various child welfare decision points.

Discussion:

- Contact information and a copy of the slides were requested
- Data on race and gender were requested. Clymer responded that she would inquire whether that data could be included on the dashboard.

**Spotlight: Local DMC Efforts/ Information Sharing**

- **Bernie Bordignon—Cedar Rapids pre-charge diversion implementation**

Bernie Bordignon provided information on the process to develop pre-charge diversion opportunities in Cedar Rapids.

In 2013, a stakeholder team attended training at Georgetown University, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. Following the training, it was apparent that more law enforcement personnel needed to be involved in the process.

Meetings were held with school resource officers regarding diversion practices for specific low-level crimes. This was followed by meetings with CJP staff, technical assistance providers, and staff from Juvenile Court Services, law enforcement, and community stakeholders. Data and information on implicit bias, disparity, and discretion were addressed.

As a result, a pre-charge diversion (PCD) program was launched for disorderly conduct, simple assault, speeding, etc., in schools with school resource officers. In the fall of 2021, PCD will be implemented in all Cedar Rapids schools and data will be collected.

Additionally, a recent report from CJP on school arrest data showed significant disparity.

Bordignon noted the lengthy process required to develop relationships and collect data to show that PCD is not harmful, but beneficial.

Padgett commented on the importance of local partnerships guided by community stakeholders, data/collection, and honest conversations to develop a plan.

McKeever added that this demonstrates that past practices have not worked and the importance of data collection to show that youth in pre-charge diversion recidivate less.

A meeting with Marion law enforcement is being planned to further PCD efforts in that area.

- **Sub-committee member sharing**

This item was not discussed.

## **DMC Goals and Objectives Updates**

- **Visible Black Girls in the Juvenile Justice System work group** (DMC Goal 2, Objective A)

DeLoach provided an update on the workgroup seated last year to develop recommendations on needs and services to prevent black girls from entering the system. Data show that black girls have a higher number of theft charges. To further address the issue, she would like to identify if what is being stolen is a 'need' or a 'want'.

- **Pre-charge diversion statewide results** (DMC Goal 1, Objective A)

Padgett reported on results of data collected on PCD for 2015-2019 and provided a definition of recidivism. Staff are reviewing demographics of youth.

This information was recently shared with Juvenile Court Services and providers in areas with PCD programs. She noted that not all PCD programs operate the same and that these programs are always evolving and improving to meet the needs of youth.

- **Joint meeting with Iowa Task Force for Young Women reflection and next steps** (DMC Goal 2, Objective B)

Padgett reviewed discussions from the joint meeting between this committee and the Iowa Task Force for Young Women. During that meeting, members conducted an exercise based on "Talking Wall" comments received from minority/LGBTQ youth in out-of-home placement. A summary will be shared. The next step is to identify a joint project(s) and/or recommendations.

- **Deep end youth report update** (DMC Goal 3, Objective A)

Padgett stated that two reports are in development—deep-end girls and deep-end boys. The reports should be completed by fall and will be included in future discussions.

## **Adjourn**

- **Next Meeting: August 11, 2021 (Virtual)**

Kayla Powell announced that she is working with Chad Jensen, Director of Juvenile Court Services, to hold a Youth Justice Summit in July. The focus is strategies for youth and family engagement.

DeLoach thanked everyone for their time. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker, Administrative Secretary  
Div. of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning

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