

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting

March 24th, 2021

Via Zoom

Present:

Steve Michael, Chair, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Ashley Arnold, Iowa Workforce Development
Julie Hibben, Iowa Department of Public Health
Will Keck, Chair, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council
Jay Pennington, Iowa Department of Education
Mary Sheka, Iowa Economic Development
Steffani Simbric, Child Advocacy Board
Shanell Wagler, Early Childhood Iowa
Doug Wolfe, Iowa Department of Human Services

Others Present:

San Wong, Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Volta Adovor, Iowa Youth Congress
Amaris Albers, AMP
Dr. Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Grand View University
Abby King, Iowa Youth Congress
Ashley McKenna, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa
Brienne Messer, CJP/AmeriCorps, Coordinator, Iowa Youth Congress
Tiara Mosely, CJP/AmeriCorps, Coordinator, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council
Meghan Oster, Iowa College Aid
Jill Padgett, CJP, Juvenile Justice Expert
Kayla Powell, CJP, NYTD/Youth Development Coordinator
Julie Rinker, CJP, Administrative Secretary
Megan Sibbel, Iowa College Aid
Kylie Spies, CJP/AmeriCorps, Youth Leadership Coordinator
Jordan Pineda, Forum for Youth Investment
Mary Ellen Wiggins, Forum for Youth Investment

I. Welcome and Announcements

Steve Michael, Chair, welcomed all in attendance at 2:03 p.m. A quorum was present. Introductions were made. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing concerns, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

a) Youth Action Squads

Michael reported that the two Youth Action Squads (COVID-19 and Racial Justice) have completed their action plans and will be presenting information later in the meeting.



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b) Mid-Iowa Health Foundation Grant

The Mid-Iowa Health Foundation is providing grant funding for the next two years to support youth engagement and youth voice with policymakers. The grant is provided to the Department of Human Rights on behalf of ICYD. Next steps and agency roles will be developed for the next phase.

c) Introduce Special Guests from Forum for Youth Investment

Michael introduced Mary Ellen Wiggins and Jordan Pineda from the Forum for Youth Investment (FYI). Through a grant and technical assistance from FYI, the YAS effort came to fruition.

II. Approval of Minutes

Will Keck moved to approve the minutes from the December 9 meeting, seconded by Doug Wolfe. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Why We're Here

Michael asked members to share why they are involved with ICYD.

Responses included:

- Youth engagement
- Early childhood and youth development
- Good use of state agency funding and development of youth leaders
- Collaboration and coordination of services for youth and those who have been or are in foster care
- Data-driven and evidence-based goals, programs, and services
- Insight from youth members through the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), Iowa Youth Congress (IYC), and the Youth Action Squads (YAS).

Mary Ellen Wiggins reported that through the Forum for Youth Investment's (FYI) Washington, DC, office, they manage the State Children's Cabinet Network across the U.S, serve as a policy coordinating body, and assist states in developing plans that will make a tangible difference in the lives of children. While many children's cabinets stop at the early childhood years, Iowa is unique in that it serves older youth as well.

IV. State of Young People in Iowa

Abby King and Volta Adovor reviewed youth-related data to help inform decisions during today's meeting and recommendations to improve youth outcomes.



There are 331,049 youth aged 10-17 in Iowa. Approximately 49% are female and 51% are male. White youth make up almost 80% of that population, followed by 10% Latinx youth, 6.7% African American youth, 3% Asian youth, and 0.4% indigenous youth.

Adovar also reviewed data on overall statewide high school graduation rates by race as well as data obtained from the Iowa Youth Survey, the Iowa Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and recommendations from the Youth Action Squads on Racial Justice and COVID-19. She noted the importance of youth engagement and inclusion in decision making.

V. Introduction to Breakout Rooms

VI. Breakout Rooms

Kayla Powell provided an introduction to virtual breakout rooms. The purpose was to strategize and develop a three-year goal(s) through interagency collaboration. Members then met in three separate breakout rooms to identify priorities.

VII. Share Out and Discussion

Wiggins facilitated discussion and members provided the following potential goals that arose during the breakout room session:

Room 1—

- Advancing racial equity
- Elevate youth voice and youth-led action
- Foster collaboration among agencies to improve outcomes for youth
- Increase positive youth development (PYD) across the state, develop a framework and guidance toward implementation.
- Increase mental health support and awareness for youth

Room 2—

- Increase collaboration and data sharing to quantify outcomes for youth
- Better sharing amongst agencies
- Youth involvement in councils

Room3—

- Mental health--Children's Behavioral Health System, increase rural access, address substance use, effects of mental health on graduation rate, data sharing/exchange, continuity of mental health statewide
- Racial Equity--provide pathways for youth representation by ethnicity and race

Wiggins asked members to consider needs and inter-agency efforts that would make a difference for youth in Iowa, including what is "actionable" to address concerns.

The following was discussed:



- Expansion of mental health resources--due to the pandemic, there are increased needs and a correlation between mental health/substance abuse and the graduation rate.
- The need to “braid” strategies together as an action plan is developed--a combination of youth voice, data use/sharing, mental health, etc.
- Ensure that youth learn from their participation (training, policy making, strategies to achieve goals, government structure, etc.) and that consideration is given to agency priorities.
- Breaking down silos across state government.

VIII. Zoom Poll

Powell asked members to select their top 2-3 priorities via a virtual, multiple choice poll. The following highlights that information.

- What are your top 2-3 desired goals for ICYD’s three-year goal:
 - Advance race equity through representation
 - Improve mental health access, support, and awareness
 - Increase awareness and implementation of positive youth development
 - Elevate/institutionalize youth engagement

Members expressed the following concerns:

- Youth present expressed that they thought youth voice would rise to the top since ICYD is about youth. They noted that youth don’t always know what to do, what direction the government is going/doing. They noted the importance of engaging youth to work towards something meaningful.
- Given the recent pandemic, racial justice and mental health have risen to the top, but youth voice should be woven into priorities established.

IX. Breakout Rooms

X. Share Out / Group Consensus on Goal

Members returned to the virtual breakout rooms to further identify goals. The following summarizes the consensus by breakout room:

Room 1--Racial equity and mental health along with other strategies “woven in”. There was some acknowledgment that some agencies may be restricted on what they can do.

Room 2 – Combining mental health access and racial equity

Room 3 – Combining mental health and racial equity

Wiggins asked members to consider what is most important and realistic for their agency. The following highlights discussion:



- Preparedness for life beyond high school, skills required to be a successful adult.
- Increased awareness and implementation of positive youth development, promote through ICYD, utilizing priority areas through that approach.
- All youth are connected to school, work, or positive relationships.
- The importance of support systems as youth transition to/during their adulthood.
- Improve access to mental health resources, help youth understand that mental health isn't necessarily the typical stereotypes.
- With the pandemic, mental health is more of an issue and schools haven't taken that seriously--whether PTSD, anxiety, or other issues. School is hard for many students, even youth who get straight A's.

Wiggins polled members only regarding areas their agency could move forward.

- What goal should ICYD focus on over the next three years:
 - Increase awareness and implementation of positive youth development.

Wiggins then polled all present (members/non-members) to choose the goal they thought was most important over the next three years.

- Improve mental health support and access (31%)
- Increase awareness and implementation of positive youth development (31%)
- 70% of Iowa's workforce having education or training beyond high school by 2025 (25%)

The following highlights discussion:

- Students are safe, prepared for adulthood, including access to mental health resources, positive youth behavior, youth voice/engagement to help better prepare youth beyond high school. This complements an existing Executive Branch priority—the Future Ready Iowa goal is 70% of Iowa's workforce having education or training beyond high school by 2025.

Wiggins suggested having a goal around positive youth development, but also include graduation rate, race/ethnicity, mental health, life skills, and racial equity. Members discussed the following:

- Spread positive youth development activities to other agencies.
- Specify what that looks like for all departments to advance the goal, know what departments must do to meet the goal moving forward.
- Develop strategies on how agencies can move forward.
- While Positive Youth Development is a great overarching goal, need to focus on how to meet the goal, plus develop goals for mental health, racial justice, education/training as subparts, including measures and what that looks like for departments to advance the goal over the next three years.



Wiggins asked members to try to reach consensus on a goal and consider next steps/strategies.

Michael noted that ICYD's purpose is to increase awareness and implementation of Positive Youth Development (PYD). Provide clarification on what PYD is, include authentic youth engagement, and identify skills youth need to be prepared for adulthood. He thought the group could include youth members to help develop a plan to educate state agencies and their staff on how to engage youth as well as provide support for those state agencies.

Will Keck moved to establish a goal to increase awareness of Positive Youth Development, seconded by Simbric.

Discussion:

- Pennington suggested that prior to voting, he preferred to have a subgroup meet to provide further definition and return for a vote at a later meeting.
- Michael asked if there was consensus to form a subgroup to develop next steps.

The motion was not voted upon and thus failed. A new motion was brought forth.

Keck moved to proceed with increasing awareness and implementation of Positive Youth Development and further explore potential goals within member agencies, seconded by Pennington. The motion was unanimously approved.

Michael asked for members to volunteer to develop a potential goal. The following members expressed interest:

Will Keck

Abby King

Volta Adovar

Mary Sheka

Jay Pennington

Steffani Simbric

Kayla Powell

Steve Michael

Kylie Spies

Tiara Mosley

Brianne Messer

Jill Padgett

Michael noted that he will ask the group to develop some specific ideas. He thought it would be good to include goals from Future Ready Iowa that relate to positive youth development. More information will be presented at the June meeting.

XI. **Next Steps and Closing**—June 23, 2021, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Rinker, Administrative Secretary

