

WYOMING STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Meeting Minutes

April 16-17, 2026: Powell, WY

Agenda:

Thursday, April 16, 2026

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes
- New Business
- Ongoing Business
- Committee Reports

Friday, April 17, 2026

- DFS Update/Report
- Community Participation
- Announcements
- County Highlights
- Adjournment

Present:

Adrienne Freng
Ally Spiess
Brittany Thorpe
Damon DeBernardi
Erica Wood
Erika Sanchez
Felice Acosta
Hattie Calvert
Jennifer Palser
Logan Christie
Melinda Cox
Nathaniel Williams
Nicole Hauser
Ruth Ogden
Sierra Hernandez
Stacy Nelson

Ex-Officio Present:

Theresa Cain
Christina McCabe
H. James Causey
Curtis Biggs
Shawn Sitzman
Kelly Addington
Allen Thompson
Joe Belcher

Via Proxy:
Brittany Cangialosi

Others Present:

Brandon Schimelpfenig (DFS)
Wendy Leach (WYSAC-NPS)
Steve Jett (WYSAC-NPS)
Laurel Wimbish (WYSAC)
Brooke Benson (WYSAC)
Rob Hyde (DFS)
Jacque Wasser (DFS)
Stacie Sullivan (DFS)
Deb Hibbard (DFS)
Matt Koritnik (Powell PD
School Resource Officer)
Bryan Skoric (Park County
Prosec. Attorney)

Absent:

Alexandra Bammel
Dale Weber
Dylan Pierce
Kassidy Thomas
Sophia Gomelsky

Call to Order

I. Call to Order: Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

- a) Roll Call/Introductions
- b) Declaration of Quorum; a quorum was established with 17 members present.

II. Approval of Minutes:

January 15-16, 2026 meeting held in Cheyenne, WY; Damon DeBernardi motioned to approve the draft minutes; Stacy Nelson seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

III. New Business:

a) Open Topic Discussion from Members

Laurel Wimbish with the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WYSAC) requested a letter of support on behalf of the SACJJ to WYSAC regarding their application for the FY25 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Non-Participating State (NPS) Grant application and was supported by the Council. Logan noted that the Executive Committee has started drafting the letter and will provide the document to Laurel prior to submission of the application.

Nate Williams provided an update regarding the Wyoming Youth Advisory Council (WYAC). He detailed a restructuring phase as well as actively recruiting new members to include former foster youth ages 14-21. Nate also noted WYAC is pursuing a new partnership with Casey Family Programs and also WYAC's upcoming in-person annual conference in Sheridan, WY.

b) Public Comment Period

No topics brought forward from the public.

c) Governing Statute Review

The SACJJ discussed their statutory duty to review state and federal budgets for juvenile justice programs; W.S. § 14-10-101(f)(viii). They concluded that their current practice of making funding recommendations satisfies this requirement without needing to conduct line-item budget reviews, and opted not to request legislative changes to the statute.

d) Strategic Plan

Logan noted that the new strategic plan for 2026-2028 has been completed and is pending final submission as it was discussed that the Executive Committee wanted to get final feedback on respective committee section language before final approval of the Plan.

e) Legislative Action Report

A brief update was provided regarding the federal Echo Act which is a part of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) and the SACJJ agreed it is beneficial for members to share national legislative alerts moving forward if they are received individually.

f) Wyoming 211 Discussion

Erica Wood discussed with the SACJJ proposing a partnership with Wyoming 211 to better communicate juvenile services to Wyoming families. The SACJJ supported this and will be inviting the Wyoming 211 Director to the June 2026 meeting to present.

g) Rutgers Trainings

Brandon shared information on a Rutgers University juvenile justice certificate program that offers CLE (Continuing Legal Education) credits. Additionally, Wendy Leach highlighted the National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) Symposium in Seattle, WA as an excellent upcoming training opportunity and is practitioner-focused for those working in the field with juveniles. This will be taking place on September 30-October 2, 2026.

IV. On-Going Business – Updates From:

a) Governor’s Meeting and Recommendation

Logan wanted to highlight that Governor Gordon met with the Executive committee during the January meeting in Cheyenne.

b) Governor’s Office – Curtis Biggs

Curtis was not available to provide an update.

c) Council Membership – Brandon Schimelpfenig

Brandon noted that the Governor’s office received three (3) new applications for SACJJ membership with one being a youth application. The individuals are from Uinta, Laramie, and Niobrara counties respectively which the SACJJ is currently lacking in membership from those areas. Brandon also highlighted whose membership terms were going to be expiring in August 2026. He advised if those members would like to apply for another term to please navigate to the online application either on the SACJJ website or the Governor’s Boards and Commissions site directly. Brandon also noted that the SACJJ is currently exceeding its youth membership requirement. It is also currently meeting its requirement for tribal representation and members whose civilian employment is considered government vs. non-government.

d) CJSB Update – Brandon Schimelpfenig

Brandon noted that 12 communities across the state submitted applications in response to the Department of Family Services’ (DFS) Request for Applications (RFA). Those communities included Albany, Campbell, Carbon, Crook, Fremont, Johnson, Laramie, Natrona, Niobrara, Sheridan, Teton, and Uinta counties. The total amount of funding within the applications exceeded the \$2 million allocation from the Wyoming Legislature by about \$400,000 so DFS is currently reviewing budgets to see what areas of the applications will be funded and what areas will not be funded.

Brandon also highlighted recent quarterly data (January 1-March 31, 2026) submitted by the current Community Juvenile Services Boards within the Reroute juvenile justice data collection system. He noted that a review of the data showed that status offenses, primarily e-cigarette and vaping citations, were the most common offenses and were heavily processed through Circuit courts rather than municipal or juvenile courts.

e) Budget Report/Grant Update – Brandon Schimelpfenig

Brandon stated that Title II 2023 has \$18,402.24 remaining. Title II 2024 also has the full \$30,000.00 remaining. The 2025 solicitation has been released by OJJDP and the Grants.gov registration is due by April 27, 2026 and the full grant application is due in JustGrants by May 4, 2026.

Brandon also announced that it is the intention of DFS to shift some of the administrative SACJJ duties from himself to the SACJJ. He noted that with other state programs taking more of his time and focus as well as the possibility of military mobilization that some responsibilities could be shifted to the SACJJ and whether those duties transfer to one member or a team of members; that could be discussed internally within the SACJJ Executive Committee. Brandon noted that DFS administration would take more of a lead-role with Title II grant application documents (drafting the budget, narrative, program description, among others). The SACJJ expressed confusion and requested clarity on the shift of duties and Brandon stated he would seek further clarity and details from his administration on which duties will be shifting and which he will be keeping.

f) Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) – Brandon Schimelpfenig

Brandon noted that Wyoming currently has 16 incoming juveniles from other states on supervision and one (1) juvenile from Wyoming that is currently being supervised by that state. No human trafficking cases have been received regarding juveniles recently.

g) WYSAC – Laurel Wimbish/Brooke Benson

Laurel and Brooke shared that WYSAC is performing a front-end web design update to Reroute to make the system more user-friendly. Laurel also shared that all subawards for the FY22/23 have been executed and that WYSAC will be requesting an extension from OJJDP for more time to spend down the funds with counties. She also noted that the FY25 solicitation for the NPS grant has been released and they are currently working on gathering information to submit for that application with OJJDP.

h) NPS Presentation – Wendy Leach/Steve Jett

Wendy and Steve presented their work on creating an interactive online inventory of statewide juvenile programs and services. They also reported on efforts to digitize the current Wyoming Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment (JDRA) to improve data collection, noting that local law enforcement agencies strongly support an electronic version. They also emphasized the need to establish written county-level policies regarding juvenile jail removal and sight/sound separation.

i) Ex-Officio Members

Allen Thompson, Executive Director for the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (WASCOP), noted that there will be a JDRA roundtable at the upcoming WASCOP conference. He noted that there will be representation from all four (4) juvenile detention centers at the conference.

V. Committee Reports

a) Executive Committee – Logan Christie

Logan noted that the committee met to propose this meeting's agenda and also purchased a projector to assist with the video conference format of quarterly meetings.

b) Grants Committee – Logan Christie

Logan highlighted the challenges local communities face with the complexities of grant writing. To address this issue, the committee proposed inviting a representative from the Wyoming Grant Assistance Program (WYGAP) to future meetings to provide expert guidance and bridge the knowledge gap for Community Juvenile Service Boards (CJSBs). Council members strongly supported this collaboration, noting that WYGAP could also assist communities in finding new grants and navigating the overall funding process.

c) Data Committee – Adrienne Freng

Adrienne noted that the committee met and drafted a standardized list of questions (regarding service capacity, funding, data tracking, and demographics) to provide to community participants (local DFS, CJSBs, County Attorneys, etc.) prior to their presentations during quarterly meetings.

d) Best Practices Committee – Stacy Nelson

Stacy shared that the committee drafted a survey for Wyoming counties to identify successful local juvenile programs and the barriers they face in providing services. The committee set a June 1st deadline to collect this information, which will be used to build a comprehensive repository and an interactive online map of available resources across the state. Additionally, they are exploring the possibility of integrating this gathered data with Wyoming 211 to maximize public accessibility and avoid duplicating efforts.

e) Outreach/Youth Committee – Erica Wood, Brittany Cangialosi

Erica noted the committee reviewed their sections of the strategic plan and also divided repository tasks with the Best Practices committee to prevent overlapping efforts. They are also working on updating the youth group section for the repository. The committee discussed distributing a recruitment flyer to locations like colleges and other organizations. Additionally, Brittany created a retention survey to send to Council members to determine why members stay on the Council and identify areas for improvement to maintain positive membership. Brittany created an additional survey regarding the Single Point of Entry to distribute to the Council in the future. The committee is also reviewing the criteria for the Neil Madsen Excellence in Juvenile Justice nomination to begin making efforts toward presentation of the award.

To address their eighth goal in the strategic plan, the committee took the old newsletter, created new templates, and split the sections among group members to make compiling the annual report easier for future reports. It was also shared

that Brittany represented Wyoming at the Western Regional Youth Member Meeting, where representatives from various states discussed youth member recruitment strategies and national meeting logistics.

f) **Legislative Committee – Nicole Hauser**

Nicole shared that the Legislative Committee tracked a fast-paced budget session and compiled a list of newly passed bills impacting juveniles, such as those addressing deepfakes (HB0102) and fentanyl penalties (SF0009) among others. She also highlighted a major legislative win that secured state funding to expand the Independent Living (IL) program. However, there were concerns over DFS issuing an RFP to consolidate the program under a single statewide provider, which Council members feared would disrupt vital relationships between youth and their local coordinators. DFS Program Manager Debra Hibbard joined the call to clarify that this consolidation is designed to reduce administrative costs, increase IL coordinator wages, and secure state funds for youth who do not qualify for federal assistance.

g) **Ad-Hoc Committee – Brittany Cangialosi**

No updates.

Friday, April 17, 2026

VI. DFS Update

Brandon Schimelpfenig reported that DFS managed 530 juvenile justice cases over the past year, achieving an 88% reunification rate for youth returning to their parents/guardians. He highlighted the Interagency Collaborative Care (ICC) program as a major success, noting it led to a 44% reduction in detention stays and a 33% decrease in wait times for residential beds for youth with complex needs. Additionally, the update detailed significant progress in supporting older youth in foster care, driven by new curriculum training that increased families' willingness to foster teenagers and a successful shift toward placing youth with known relatives.

VII. Community Participation

a) **Park County DFS-Powell**

Rob Hyde, juvenile probation officer in Powell, reported that the Park County DFS office currently manages a caseload of 12 juvenile probation cases, though they have seen a recent increase in sexual offense cases alongside standard property and substance usage violations. He highlighted that their greatest local strength is excellent communication among agencies, driven by weekly Single Point of Entry meetings, monthly multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings, and strong relationships with local schools and law enforcement. He noted that their primary struggles involve a severe lack of local mental health counselors and difficulty finding appropriate residential placements for youth with complex needs or those aging out of the system.

b) Park County Attorney

Park County Attorney Brian Skoric highlighted the success of their weekly Single Point of Entry meetings, where his office collaboratively reviews juvenile citations with DFS, local schools, and law enforcement to determine the most appropriate intervention. He emphasized their heavy reliance on diversion programs rather than formal juvenile court, noting this prevents the district courts from becoming overwhelmed and achieves a 100% restitution rate since families agree to terms outside the traditional legal system.

c) Park County School District #1 and School Resource Officer

Park County School Resource Officer Matt Koritnik reported that truancy is the most significant challenge for the Park County School District as the schools lack the legal "teeth" to enforce attendance when parents and students are uncooperative. To address standard nicotine vaping offenses, the district utilizes in-school suspensions paired with a mandatory educational awareness course to ensure students are not simply sent home to continue vaping. However, Officer Koritnik noted a recent increase in students possessing THC cannabis vapes from Montana, which the school treats strictly as controlled substance violations that receive formal citations rather than school-level diversion.

VIII. County Highlights

The SACJJ briefly highlighted key areas from the meeting.

- Strong collaboration amongst agencies in Park County.
- Successful diversion program.

IX. Announcements

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 18-19, 2026, in Saratoga, WY.

UPDATE: Due to unavailability of lodging within Saratoga, the meeting has been moved to Rawlins, WY.

X. Adjournment

Damon DeBernardi motioned to adjourn the meeting; Stacy Nelson seconded the motion; all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.