

WYOMING STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Meeting Minutes

April 18-19, 2024: Torrington, WY

Agenda:

Thursday, April 18, 2024

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

Friday, April 19, 2024

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

Present:

Abbey Kercher
Adrienne Freng
Alexandra Bammel
Brittany Cangialosi
Damon DeBernardi
Dylan Pierce
Erica Wood
Jennifer Palser
Kassidy Thomas
Logan Christie
Nicole Hauser
Ruth Ogden
Stacy Becker

Ex-Officio Present:

Jacob Edwards
Shawn Sitzman

Via Proxy:

Melinda Cox
Narina Nunez

Others Present:

Brandon Schimelpfenig (DFS)
Korin Schmidt (DFS)
Lindsey Schilling (DFS)
Laurel Wimbish (WYSAC)
Dusti Moats
Allen Thompson (WASCOP)
Darcy Clark (DFS)
Eric Boyer (County Atty.)

Absent:

Alan Stuber
Chris Jones
Dakota Jackson
Dale Weber
Erika Sanchez
Lila Konecky
Patricia O'Brien
Ronald Howard
Stacy Nelson

Call to Order

I. Call to Order: Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 1:00p.

- a) Roll Call/Introductions
- b) Declaration of Quorum; a quorum was established with 15 members present.

II. Approval of Minutes:

January 18-19, 2024 meeting held in Cheyenne, WY; Damon DeBernardi motioned to approve the draft minutes; Abbey Kercher and Ruth Ogden seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

III. **New Business:**

a) February 27, 2024: Governor's Meeting and Recommendations

Logan stated the Executive committee met with Governor Gordon on February 27 and thought the meeting went pretty well overall. He then briefly discussed the recommendations from the SACJJ including staffing and workforce shortages in juvenile justice statewide. Another recommendation was to increase funding for mental health access and services as well as continued funding of the Community Juvenile Services Boards (CJSB). Another recommendation was continued collection of juvenile justice data to better inform juvenile justice stakeholders statewide as well as the Governor of trends surrounding juvenile justice in local communities. The Governor also asked what the familiarity was of the SACJJ regarding treatment options involving substances that are in Wyoming for juveniles.

b) 2024 Legislation

Update provided in Legislative committee update.

c) Technical Assistance – TA Opportunity for WY - Requirements

Erica Wood discussed an opportunity that was brought forth from the Council for State Governments (CSG) for technical assistance on assessing strengths and areas of need regarding juvenile justice within Wyoming. Within the communication from CSG, they also discussed bringing high-level juvenile justice stakeholders together and facilitating discussions surrounding these areas of strength and need. Erica broached the topic of collaborating with CSG regarding this and the SACJJ decided that at this time, they will turn down this opportunity.

d) School and Vaping Concerns

Erica mentioned that in Campbell County that their alternative school is reaching capacity with expulsion and suspension levels due to vaping. Jacob Edwards discussed the issue facing juveniles with mental health concerns and wanting to use illicit substances including vaping and local schools appearing to rely heavily on suspensions or expulsions; which has proven to be an ineffective deterrent. Jen Palser mentioned the current statute on vaping for juveniles that states that vaping in schools is only a \$25.00 fine.

e) Open Topic Discussion from Members

Jacob discussed the concern from that he had received from his local community regarding juvenile detention centers in Wyoming starting to become insular and not accepting out-of-county juveniles. Allen Thompson with the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (WASCOP) stated that per statute, local sheriffs are in control of their local detention centers regarding adults. He stated that he is not aware of a Wyoming statute that dictates that a juvenile detention center must accept out-of-county juveniles. Allen also mentioned the issue of staffing and bed-space shortages in local JDCs as a contributing factor. Logan stated that he would table the discussion for now and would continue the discussion at the next meeting in June 2024.

- f) Public Comment
No topics were brought forth by members of the public.

IV. On-Going Business – Updates From:

a) Collaboration With Other Wyoming Councils

Abbey Kercher stated that the Outreach committee had drafted a letter to send out to other Wyoming state councils and had sent it out to the SACJJ for their review. She asked the SACJJ for a vote on if the letter looked ok to send out to Wyoming state councils. Erica Wood mentioned that a topic came up asking if the letter should be revised when sent out to specific councils asking what they would like to collaborate on. Logan stated that the SACJJ could table the discussion until tomorrow (4/19) so that members of the SACJJ could look at the draft letter one more time before a final decision is made. Stacy Becker motioned to approve the letter with the included revisions; Ruth Ogden seconded the motioned; all in favor; motion carried and the collaboration letter and its language were approved.

On the second day of the meeting, 04/19/24, the SACJJ discussed the collaboration letter and Abbey Kercher highlighted a few revisions she wanted to make before the SAJJ voted on the letter. It was determined that the revisions would be made to the approved letter and then the letter would be mailed to the known list of Wyoming Councils. A possible list of other Councils was briefly discussed to see if Abbey Kercher could share the respective letter with these known Councils.

b) 14-Day Requirement-Updates

Logan stated that this requirement continues to be an issue with communities across the state.

c) Governor’s Office

Jen Davis was present to discuss the Governor’s Office updates. She stated that the Governor is very focused on mental health right now for Wyoming communities with a major focus on five (5) key areas. She stated those are access to care, affordability of care, quality of care, decreasing the stigma surrounding mental health and, and innovation within mental health services. Jen also stated that the Governor is focusing on an anti-stigma messaging campaign surrounding mental health. There are currently two active campaigns in Wyoming. One program is called “Beyond The Weather” and is a program that is partnering Wyoming and Montana and is focused on farmers, ranchers and the agricultural community receiving mental health services. Jen stated if they do not have health insurance coverage, they can reach out to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and they can provide vouchers to assist with obtaining that coverage. Within this program, it also preaches to the agricultural community that it’s ok to talk about mental health. Another program is “Reach

Out 2 Me” and is an anti-stigma messaging campaign to help end suicide amongst military veterans and is being piloted in Sheridan and Casper currently with hopes to branch out statewide. Jen Davis also shared the Governor was looking into barriers in the industries such as licensing board rules, discussing a “pipeline for behavioral health force,” and also a paid health care continuum idea. Jen also shared there is a community mental health study focusing on suicide prevention with Dr. Corso.

d) Council Membership – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated that the SACJJ currently has 24 members and that Gabi Farmer with the Governor’s Office Board and Commissions Coordinator has received two (2) applications from the public for membership. Brandon also listed members whose terms are expiring effective August 31, 2024.

e) CJSB Reform – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated that he had sent out the CJSB application for the upcoming state fiscal biennium, July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026, and has received most of the applications back from communities that were interested in applying for the funding. He stated he is still waiting for a few applications but that he would send out the completed applications to the CJSB Review Committee for scoring and comments. He also stated that he has completed and submitted a template CJSB contract with template attachments in the contract submission system for review by the agency contract’s manager as well as DFS administration and the contracts division for the Attorney General’s office. Once that is approved, he stated he would start drafting individual contracts with respective attachments and send those out to each CJSB for their draft review.

Brandon also mentioned that he and Jacob Edwards from DFS would be starting their CJSB Technical Assistance (TA) travels around the state and meeting with all of the CJSBs in their respective counties starting May 5, 2024.

f) Budget Report/Grant Update – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated that Title II 2020 has been fully expended; Title II 2021 has \$25,493.58 remaining and Title II 2022 has \$30,000.00 remaining. Title II 2023 has the full \$30,000.00 remaining.

g) Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) – Brandon Schimelpfenig
No updates.

V. Committee Reports

a) Executive Committee – Logan Christie
Logan was not available on the second day of the meeting but Erica Wood was able to provide an update from the Executive committee. She stated they met in the interim and drafted the proposed agenda for this meeting. They also discussed the February 2024 meeting with the Governor.

- b) Grants Committee – Logan Christie
Erica Wood stated that the committee did not meet as there was nothing to discuss at the time. Erica requested Laurel Wimbish with WYSAC share the positive news regarding the Non-Participating State (NPS) grant from OJJDP. Laurel obliged and stated that WYSAC was recently awarded the 2022 and 2023 NPS grant from OJJDP and that she is currently drafting the application to then send out to Wyoming communities. Once the applications have been received back from the applicants, then Laurel requested to have the Grants committee review those once again; similar to when Volunteers of America Northern Rockies administered the grant in Wyoming.
- c) Data Committee – Adrienne Freng
Adrienne stated that the Data committee has been working on taking the current Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment (JDRA) and formatting it into an electronic format for law enforcement to subsequently use. Adrienne stated that Allen Thompson with WASCOP was going to discuss the topic with the juvenile detention centers (JDC) while also emphasizing that local control will be maintained.
- d) Best Practices Committee – Alan Stuber
Alan was not present to discuss an update but Erica Wood stated that they had not met in the interim and no update was available.
- e) Outreach/Youth Committee – Erica Wood, Brittany Cangialosi
Erica stated that they met and discussed drafting a spreadsheet to discuss what communities around the state are doing regarding juvenile services and incorporate that into best practices. Adrienne cautioned on incorporating those efforts and stating they are “best practices” as what some counties are doing might be working for their community but not necessarily considered “best practice.” Erica also stated that Brittany Cangialosi reached out to Brandon to see what kind of language he sends to communities when the SACJJ is traveling to those areas; when he reaches out to the local CJSB, local County Attorney and, local DFS and seeing what those communications look like. Erica stated that with those communications Brittany was able to draft a template communication for when the Outreach committee reaches out to communities to gauge what they are doing regarding juvenile services.
- f) Legislative Committee – Nicole Hauser
Nicole stated that the committee had tracked legislation during the recent Legislative session as it relates to juvenile justice or juvenile services. She briefly highlighted the discussion from Lindsey and Korin with DFS surrounding ICWA and wanted to also mention that went into effect immediately on March 7, 2024 as opposed to waiting for the new state fiscal year to commence on July 1, 2024. Nicole also discussed the bill that passed surrounding the ban on psychoactive chemicals in hemp products in Wyoming which will go into effect on July 1, 2024. She also mentioned the addition of \$100,000.00 to the DFS budget for

justice reporting. There was discussion surrounding the recent bill that passed for schools on mandating reporting for school employees to report on gender affirming care information; if it is offered to a student.

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VI. DFS Update/Report

Korin Schmidt, Director, and Lindsey Schilling, Senior Administrator for the Social Services division, were present via Zoom to discuss administrative updates from DFS. Korin started the discussions by explaining the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) from the federal level as well as the state level. There was discussion at the federal level on whether or not juvenile delinquency cases should be involved in ICWA and summarized the discussion by stating that juvenile delinquency cases will not be involved in ICWA. Next, she briefly summarized the recent budget session in Wyoming Legislature and the DFS budget. She mentioned that the CJSB budget was included in an exception request and was passed in the DFS budget and has now been reinstated in DFS' standard operating budget which means that DFS will not have to go back every two (2) years to request CJSB funding.

Korin mentioned that DFS received rate increases to out-of-home service providers which includes family foster care, group home, crisis services, residential treatment centers and, BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services). She also mentioned that DFS was awarded a continuation on prevention services funds. DFS was also able to convert all part-time service aide positions to full-time positions. Korin also mentioned that DFS is seeing a significant increase in adult protective service cases and reports. Lindsey briefly highlighted the upcoming WYOSAFE case management system trainings offered to DFS staff.

VII. Community Participation

a) Goshen County DFS

Darcy Clark, Social Services Supervisor in Goshen county, was present to discuss what local DFS is seeing in the Goshen county area. She stated that so far in 2024, there have been 10 juvenile cases filed and the majority of them are CHINS (Child in Need of Supervision). Darcy also stated that marijuana usage, fighting, and cocaine usage is prevalent in the local high school. She also mentioned that generational poverty is high in Goshen county. She noted a need for the county is to acquire some sort of crisis shelter or juvenile detention center for when juveniles come into crisis, there is nowhere locally that they can go for a cooling-off period and have to be transported out-of-county to either Gillette, Casper, Cheyenne, or Rock Springs.

b) Goshen County Attorney's Office

Eric Boyer, Goshen County and Prosecuting Attorney, was present to discuss what his office is seeing regarding juvenile crime. Eric stated that vaping is a major concern in the local schools. He also mentioned that Goshen county is the 2nd most impoverished county in the state, only behind Niobrara county, and that the county receives the majority of its revenue through the sale of

agricultural goods. He stated that with that, most families are severely underpaid and the parents work long hours to where juvenile can sometimes be left unsupervised for long hours. Eric also shared that their community has challenges with getting juveniles to a juvenile detention center in instances when a juvenile needs secure placement.

VIII. County Highlights

The SACJJ briefly highlighted key areas from the meeting in Goshen county.

- Substance abuse is prevalent among delinquent juveniles.
- Great collaboration amongst child welfare, juvenile justice, and other governmental agencies to address and provide juvenile services.
- Excited about starting a Youth Alternatives program in the community.
- Local detention and crisis housing for juveniles is a need.

IX. Announcements

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 20-21, 2024 in Sheridan, WY.

X. Adjournment

Adrienne Freng motioned to adjourn the meeting; Damon DeBernardi seconded the motion; all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:38a.