

WYOMING STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Meeting Minutes

June 19-20, 2025: Gillette, WY

Agenda:

Thursday, June 19, 2025

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes
- New Business
- Ongoing Business
- Committee Reports
- Tour of Campbell County Juvenile Detention Center

Friday, June 20, 2025

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

Present:

Adrienne Freng
Brittany Cangialosi
Damon DeBernardi
Erica Wood
Erika Sanchez
Hattie Calvert
Jennifer Palser
Logan Christie
Nicole Hauser
Ruth Ogden
Stacy Nelson

Ex-Officio Present:

Jacob Edwards
Christina McCabe
Maggy Laing
Curtis Biggs
H. James Causey
Shawn Sitzman

Via Proxy:

Abbey Kercher
Alan Stuber

Others Present:

Brandon Schimelpfenig (DFS)
Brooke Benson (WYSAC)
Steve Jett (WYSAC)
Wendy Leach (WYSAC)
Wendy Ross (AG Office)
Steve Hamaker (GW BBBS)
Allen Thompson (WASCOP)
Seth Marbry (Gillette PD)
Eric Stremcha (Campbell County School Dist.)
Bonnie Volk (DFS)
Jammie Walker (DFS)
Jim Lyon (Campbell County Probation)
Rep. Abby Angelos (WY Legislature)

Absent:

Alexandra Bammel
Chris Jones
Dale Weber
Dylan Pierce
Kassidy Thomas
Lila Konecky
Melinda Cox
Nathaniel Williams
Sophia Gomelsky
Stacy Becker

Call to Order

I. Call to Order: Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 1:00p.

- a) Roll Call/Introductions
- b) Declaration of Quorum; a quorum was established with 13 members present.

II. Approval of Minutes:

April 24-25, 2025 meeting held in Riverton, WY; Damon DeBernardi motioned to approve the draft minutes; Stacy Nelson seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

III. New Business:

a) Strategic Plan Review

Logan discussed a review of the current strategic plan for the SACJJ and the possibility of collaborating with a coordinator to assist with drafting the next strategic plan. Brooke Benson with the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WYSAC) spoke on the possibility of using their funding with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for strategic planning efforts and are optimistic the request gets approved by the new OJJDP Program Manager; Marisa O'Harris. Brooke stated that WYSAC would need to change their Scope of Work that was submitted to OJJDP for their funding as well as submit a revised budget. Brandon Schimelpfenig briefly discussed previous strategic plan efforts and hiring a consultant to assist with the formation of those documents. Nicole Hauser mentioned utilizing Align in Cheyenne as they specialize in this type of work.

b) Open Topic Discussion from Members

Jacob Edwards stated that in the past month, DFS has seen a significant increase in public records requests and specifically requests for juvenile justice data such as expenditures being spent in counties, where juveniles are being placed, services offered to juveniles, among others.

Nicole Hauser brought forth the topic of Sweetwater County Detention Center reclassifying their juvenile detention beds to hold Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees. Adrienne mentioned that the SACJJ does not currently have any representation from District 3 which includes Lincoln, Sweetwater and Uinta counties.

c) Financial Committee

Erica Wood suggested the possibility of creating a separate committee to review and approve of expenditures however Adrienne Freng suggested it would be better to have the Executive committee review expenditures then come to each meeting to discuss recent expenditures with the full SACJJ. Logan agreed with that suggestion and requested if Brandon could pull expenditures for the SACJJ dating back to 2019 and come with those reports to the September meeting.

d) Priority Areas for the Council

Erica Wood discussed the option for each SACJJ committee to internally discuss priority areas for the next SACJJ strategic plan then have each committee chair discuss them during the next SACJJ meeting in September. Logan mentioned to keep mental health services and access to those service as a priority.

e) Presentation for Department of Health

Erica Wood discussed the topic of having someone from the SACJJ present to the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) on what function the SACJJ serves as well as sharing some juvenile justice information in July 2025. Some of the questions posed by WDH were trends in juvenile diversion, weaknesses in

juvenile diversion in Wyoming, and how does the SACJJ distribute funding in Wyoming to further its mission. Erica asked the SACJJ and discussion was held if they would still be open to provide a brief presentation to WDH.

- f) **Non-Participating Award Presentation – Wendy Leach/Steve Jett**
Wendy Leach and Steve Jett, consultants working with the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WYSAC), presented information on OJJDP's four core protections and how Wyoming's non-participation status factors in and how the SACJJ might be able to assist with coming back into compliance with the requirements. Wendy and Steve also discussed the Wyoming JDRA and that after interviews with multiple law enforcement agencies across the state, there was unanimous sentiment that the assessment as it stands is completed to simply comply with the statute rather than to assess risk and decide if detention is warranted for a particular youth. Wendy discussed some challenges to Wyoming coming back into compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) including no single agency that oversees juvenile justice for the state, each county has their own processes and they prefer it that way, little incentive to become compliant/tied to federal funding, no single data system to track outcomes, among others.

Contained within a survey to law enforcement agencies around the state asking questions on the Wyoming JDRA was some evidence that the current JDRA needs to be discussed and possibly revised. Wendy stated that their survey found that 27% of respondents don't use the JDRA at all; when asked if the agency finds the JDRA useful or helpful, 47% stated yes and 53% stated no or they don't utilize it; 27% of respondents detain status offenders; and 27% of responding counties do not have a non-secure detention alternative available or were not aware of one in their area. Wendy stated that when she asked law enforcement if they had a "magic wand" and could wish for something to make juvenile justice better and more efficient in Wyoming, most respondents stated they wish the State would take over juvenile justice. Another shared sentiment is a lack of non-detention options for juveniles statewide.

- g) **Executive Committee Membership**
Logan Christie mentioned that a spot on the Executive Committee will soon be available and asked if any SACJJ member would be interested in putting their name in for consideration on the committee. The vote was tabled until the next meeting in September.
- h) **Public Comment Period**
No topics were brought forth.

IV. On-Going Business – Updates From:

- a) **Governor's Meeting and Recommendation**
Logan mentioned that the Executive Committee is looking at traveling to Cheyenne about the third week of July to meet with the Governor.

- b) Council Membership – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated that SACJJ membership stands at 23 members and that there are only a few members whose terms are expiring in August 2025; Brittany Cangialosi, Lila Konecki, Ruth Ogden, and Stacy Becker. Brandon also mentioned that there is not currently representation from District 3 which includes Sweetwater, Uinta, and Lincoln counties. Members shared they would seek out possible candidates in these counties.
- c) Governor’s Office – Curtis Biggs
Curtis Biggs, Senior Policy Advisor for Governor Gordon, was available to present updates from the Governor’s Office. Curtis wanted to reiterate to the SACJJ that should anyone have a question or concern for the Governor’s Office to please reach out to him as he is happy to field those questions. Curtis also mentioned he was able to attend the recent Camp POSTCARD and said it was a great experience seeing the interactions between law enforcement and youth in the state. Curtis stated that if individuals had not experienced this, he would encourage learning more about the camp or other positive opportunities like this camp. Adrienne Freng asked Curtis what the Governor’s priorities for juvenile justice were as the SACJJ is getting ready to draft its next strategic plan and would like to know how to build around the Governor’s priorities. Adrienne stated an answer isn’t needed right away but maybe at the September meeting in Thermopolis.
- d) CJSB – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated that he is currently drafting an Amendment Application for funding and said what that looks like is all of the non-participating counties with the CJSB program and their funding are going to be redistributed to the participating counties with active CJSBs in amended contracts. He also said that DFS will be reworking the CJSB application for the July 1, 2026-June 30, 2028, biennium with an emphasis on data collection as well as each diversion program working with the whole family as opposed to just the juvenile.
- e) Budget Report/Grant Update – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated that Title II 2022 has the full \$16,507.24 remaining. Title II 2023 also has the full \$30,000.00 remaining. Title II 2024 has the full \$30,000.00 remaining. Brandon stated that he recently applied for Title II 2025. UPDATE: this was an erroneous statement; the Title II 2025 application has not been opened for solicitations to-date.
- f) Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) – Brandon Schimelpfenig
Brandon stated there were no major updates for ICJ. Erica Wood requested juvenile data on ICJ juveniles within Wyoming as well juveniles that Wyoming is sending out-of-state for probation supervision. Brandon stated that he could pull that data together and have it readily available for the next SACJJ meeting in September.

V. Committee Reports

a) Executive Committee – Logan Christie

Logan stated the Executive Committee met prior to this meeting and discussed SACJJ membership and getting a good line of communication between the SACJJ and the Governor's Office. They also discussed scheduling a date to travel to Cheyenne to meet with the Governor.

b) Grants Committee – Logan Christie

Logan stated that the Grants committee met but they will need to meet again to discuss a line-item budget for the SACJJ.

c) Data Committee – Adrienne Freng

Adrienne stated the group met in the interim and discussed the future of the committee as it is a shared sentiment that the data committee might have served its intended purpose of establishing a statewide juvenile justice data collection system; the JJIS (Juvenile justice Information System).

d) Best Practices Committee – Stacy Nelson

Stacy stated that the committee had not met but that they will meet before the September meeting. No further updates.

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

Erica Wood stated that the group met in the interim and reviewed the repository of the County Attorney offices around the state as well as Sheriff's offices. She also mentioned that they would be updating some entries as some contacts in those office might have changed since the creation of the sheet. Erica also stated that the group has been working on a quarterly newsletter for the SACJJ so that when it comes time to draft the SACJJ's Annual Report that information collection efforts should be streamlined.

f) Legislative Committee – Nicole Hauser

Nicole stated that Ruth Ogden brought forth some legislation that is currently being reviewed by Legislative interim committees. Nicole also briefly discussed the reauthorization of the JJDPA in Congress. Ruth briefly talked about a House bill being discussed in Wyoming Legislature; HB0083 which she mentioned is under Title 20 and discusses best interest of the child. Nicole mentioned that interim committee meetings for Wyoming Legislature have been shortened from a typical five-day meeting to just two days.

g) Ad-Hoc Committee - VACANT

Erica Wood stated that the committee was initially discussing the committee and had met a few times to put together a statewide training and discussed different locations for the training. Erica also mentioned that the group discussed different topics for the training but that with the recent budget cuts around the

state with different programs that the committee was not sure if they wanted to continue planning efforts. Erica stated that the chair of the committee was Stacy Becker however with her membership status in-question, she wanted to bring it up to the rest of the Council to see if the committee should continue. Adrienne Freng mentioned that initially the idea was for WYSAC to fund the statewide training however she wasn't sure if that was still accurate. It was decided to table the discussion until the September meeting to choose a new chair for the committee.

Friday, June 20, 2025

VI. DFS Update

Brandon Schimelpfenig provided the DFS update on behalf of Director Schmidt and Senior Administrator Gordy. Brandon stated that DFS does not have any funding decreases to report other than those that were requested in the state supplemental budget session which included funding for the DFS Independent Living Program (Older Youth in Care/Aging Out) and Adult Protection Services; it should be noted the Wyoming Legislature did not pass a supplemental budget. DFS completed the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and DFS submitted the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) regarding child protection and juvenile justice cases. DFS has received feedback from its federal partners on the proposed PIP. DFS is currently in the process of negotiating the specifics within the PIP. Casefile reviews have started throughout the state with the first being in Cheyenne at the start of the month, and Gillette and Jackson next week. The PIP will be addressing 6 goals tied to safety, permanency, well-being, foster care, training, and continuous quality improvement (CQI). DFS will be focusing on enhancing the current great work being done and the implementation of a few initiatives. The PIP runs for approximately the next 3 to 4 years.

- Ensure children (including those involved in juvenile services cases) are safe by timely, accurately, and comprehensively assessing risk and safety;
- Ensure children have timely permanency and preserve and develop family relationships and connections while in foster care regardless of ethnicity and race;
- Improve engagement with families throughout the life of a case by accurately identifying strengths, needs, and goals to include appropriate and timely services;
- Leverage the use of WYOSAFE to ensure children are safe when placed in foster or adoptive homes by tracking required criminal background checks completed prior to placements (this was occurring it just could not be fully captured in the old data system);
- Ensure quality ongoing training is provided to social services supervisors and staff to enhance their knowledge and skills to perform their job duties, to

include an effective feedback loop and consistent tracking of requirements to support their learning; and

- Enhance and implement a sustainable QA and CQI system at the State and Field level to include a consistent feedback loop with staff, supervisors, and stakeholders leading to a Continuous Quality Improvement mindset.

DFS has implemented its new training program for foster parents and are currently in the first session with a group of new foster parents. The curriculum is called NTDC; the National Training and Development Curriculum. The NTDC is based on research and input from experts and families who have experience with fostering or adopting children, and former foster and adoptive youth. A pilot was held with current foster parents and feedback was exceptional. Pilot data displayed the most striking and pervasive trend is the exceptionally high satisfaction levels across all surveyed aspects and themes. Average ratings consistently hover very close to the maximum score of 5.0 (typically 4.5 and above), indicating that foster care providers and adoptive parents find the NTDC highly valuable and well-delivered.

- Participants generally agreed that the training provided valuable tools for managing behavioral and emotional issues, with an average response of 4.5 out of 5 for effectiveness of strategies and techniques;
- They also found NTDC training helpful for crisis management, averaging 4.5;
- A significant majority (over 60%) believed the training offered strategies that could have prevented or reconsidered a placement disruption;
- Furthermore, participants reported being more open to the ages and individual needs of children, with an average agreement of 4.3; and
- Overall, the concepts learned were successfully applied to the children in their care, with an average agreement of 4.6.

As directed by Wyoming Statute § 14-3-215, DFS operates the Interagency Children's Collaborative (ICC). The ICC has established three operating objectives:

- Assessing and developing systems of care;
- Individual case management and crisis intervention; and
- Interagency education and training.

An ICC subgroup designated to review urgent cases meets no less frequently than once per month. This subgroup includes staff members from the Department of Education, Department of Health, and DFS. Most often, there are significant behavioral challenges and disruptions that lead to the referral of these youth and adolescents to the ICC. The most common examples of observed placement challenges include:

- Significant aggression towards self or others,
- Oppositional defiance,
- Atypical behavior due to developmental delays,
- Self-injurious behavior,
- Medication non-compliance,
- Lack of, or outdated evaluations (psychiatric, psychological, neurodevelopmental, psychosocial, etc.),
- High-risk behaviors (fecal smearing, swallowing non-food items, etc.),
- Problematic sexual behaviors, and
- Comorbid medical conditions (encopresis, enuresis, casts for broken bones, etc.) or psychological concerns that resemble a medical concern (nonepileptic seizures).

Detention Placements

Since SFY (State Fiscal Year) 2023, DFS has seen a significant decrease in both the number of ICC youth and the number of days ICC youth spend in detention. In SFY 2023, the average number of days spent in detention was 166. This dropped to 108 in SFY 2024, and so far in SFY 2025, it averages 42 days. In SFY 2023, 14 youth were in detention, compared to 12 youth in SFY 2024, and just 6 youth so far in SFY 2025. This represents a 74% decrease in the number of ICC youth spending time in detention over three years of ICC work. In terms of why this has happened, DFS believes there are several contributing factors. DFS has gotten better at quickly identifying specialized placements and services, and the ability to use ICC funds to pay for out-of-network programs has expanded access to resources that were previously unavailable. DFS continues to strengthen relationships with specialized programs, enabling more of them to enroll in Wyoming Medicaid. Additionally, teams are now reaching out to ICC earlier in the process, preventing youth from lingering in detention when it is not appropriate.

Demographics and Other Data

DFS has also significantly reduced the average number of days a youth spends waiting for a bed, which likely contributes to the decrease in the number of days spent in detention. In SFY 2023, youth waited an average of 60 days for a bed; in 2024, this dropped to 41 days, and so far in 2025, the average is 33 days.

Furthermore, the number of youths successfully returning to the community has increased. In 2023, no ICC youth discharged from placement successfully remained in the community. In 2024, DFS had 3 ICC youth achieve this, and so far in 2025, DFS has had 7.

Jacob Edwards also provided a brief update on the JJIS stating that JJIS Rules were signed by the Governor's office on May 7, 2025. He also stated that not all law enforcement officers will have access to JJIS, initially, but rather access will be granted to a select few within each agency office.

VII. Community Participation

a) District Court Judge

The Hon. James Causey, District Court Judge for District 6, was present to discuss juvenile crime trends that he is seeing within his court regarding juveniles. Judge Causey stated that his court as well as the other three District Court judges in District 6 see a multitude of juvenile crime, but he wanted the SACJJ to note that juvenile crime is currently heading in a positive direction in that there hasn't been an increase in any particular area. Judge Causey mentioned that the lack of providers for juvenile services in the area is of monumental concern.

b) Campbell County Attorney's Office

No representatives present.

c) Campbell County CJSB

Jim Lyons, Director of Campbell County Juvenile Probation, was present to discuss services that are offered through the Campbell County CJSB member agencies. Jim stated that his office with Campbell County Juvenile Probation supervise juveniles through municipal as well as circuit court and that Campbell County also has a juvenile court. Jim wanted to highlight the positive collaboration between all agencies in Campbell County when working with juveniles and providing services. This includes local DFS, the school district, local mental health, the Y.E.S. House, the courts, as well as Campbell County Juvenile Probation. Jim briefly discussed the programs that are funded through the local CJSB including the Y.E.S. House and programs such as Project Choice and Crisis Intervention and Mediation. The Campbell County Juvenile Family and Drug Court (JFDC) is also funded by the Campbell County CJSB grant. Tru-Thought Corrective Thinking training is also funded by this grant and is offered to Campbell County Juvenile Probation Officers.

d) Campbell County DFS

Bonnie Volk, District Manager for Campbell, Crook and Weston counties, as well as Jammie Walker, Social Services Worker, were present to discuss trends that the local DFS office is seeing. Bonnie started by stating that Campbell County uses the ICC to find placements and services for juveniles in her area occasionally as there have been some tough-to-place juveniles lately. Bonnie stated from 2023-2025, the ICC has served 7 juveniles from Campbell County; with the average age of those juveniles being 16 years old. Bonnie mentioned that 85% of those juveniles have some sort of developmental disability and require some sort of special services. Bonnie stated that currently in Campbell County, there are 47 juveniles on DFS probation. In Weston County, there are 4 delinquency cases and 2 CHINS cases. In Crook County she stated there are 7

delinquency cases. Erica Wood asked Bonnie if there were any barriers that Campbell County DFS is currently seeing and Bonnie stated that there are CPS as well as juvenile probation cases that placements are getting harder and harder to find for these juveniles. Bonnie also stated that the biggest trend that her office is seeing is substance abuse amongst juveniles with overlapping mental health issues. She also mentioned that juvenile CHINS cases seem to be getting younger and younger. Bonnie also shared one area of need for Campbell County could be for example parental capacity assessments.

- e) Campbell County School District Superintendent or Representative
Eric Stremcha, Student Support Services with Campbell County School District #1, was present to discuss the S.T.A.R. program as well as trends he sees in his office. The S.T.A.R. program, Specialized Treatment and Rehabilitation, has seen great success in the Campbell County schools. The program “works to address disciplinary and behavioral concerns with students in Campbell County School District. It is an alternative to student expulsion and/or suspension in the district. The program provides students/families with an opportunity for an “uninterrupted” education. It is free to families and provides a positive alternative where students work on personal issues, continue their education and have access to professional services in the community.” All students enrolled in the Campbell County School District are eligible for referral if they are between the ages of 11-18 and in grades 5-12.
- f) Campbell County School Resource Officer (SRO)
Seth Marby, Campbell County SRO, was present to discuss trends in the Campbell County schools. Officer Marby stated that at Campbell County High School expulsions are down about 54%. He stated that THC vapes are trending upward in usage. Thunder Basin High School has a slight uptick in expulsions this past year. Most juvenile crimes between all the schools outside of vaping have trended downward in the past year; assault, threats, etc.
- g) Wyoming Legislature–House District 3
Representative Abby Angelos attended the SACJJ meeting.

There were public discussions regarding if the property tax changes could/would influence resources in Campbell County.

VIII. County Highlights

The SACJJ briefly highlighted key areas from the meeting.

- Collaboration is very positive with all juvenile justice stakeholders within Campbell County.
- School expulsions are trending downward in Campbell County.
- Funding is distributed well between juvenile justice agencies.

IX. Announcements

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 18-19, 2025, in Thermopolis, WY.

X. Adjournment

Damon DeBernardi motioned to adjourn the meeting; Stacy Nelson seconded the motion; all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25a.