



# Juvenile Justice Advisory Group

**Quarterly Meeting  
Minutes  
March 10, 2020  
633 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
New York, NY**

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**Attendees:**

**JJAG Members**

**Staff and Guests**

Euphemia S. Adams	N	
Joseph J. Cocozza	N	<i>NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)</i>
Brendan Cox	N	Mark White (Albany)
Michelle Diaz	Y	<i>Office of Youth Justice (OYJ)</i>
Edward Fergus	Y	Greg Owens
Michael C. Green	Y	Tom Andriola
Niasha Hamilton	Y	Meagan Armstrong (Albany)
Hon. Martha Walsh Hood	Y	Trista Deame (Albany)
Precious Lugo	Y	Shalain Garcia
Emily Tow	N	Raquel Derrick
Robert M. Maccarone	Y	<i>Office of Program Development and Funding (OPDF)</i>
Hon. Edwina Mendelson (phone)	Y	Jeff Bender
Pamela Neubeck	N	Maura Gagan (Albany)
Sheila J. Poole	N	Benedicta Adewummi (Albany)
Meredith Ray-LaBatt	N	<i>Youth Justice Institute (YJI)</i>
Karen Richmond	Y	Giza Lopes
Allen Riley	Y	William Pridemore
Jason Williams	Y	
Lester Young	Y	<i>NYS Education Department (SED)</i> Anael Alston

<b>TOTAL in attendance</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Required for Quorum</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>Counted in Quorum (phone not included)</i>	<b>11</b>

## **Introduction**

Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) chair Dr. Eddie Fergus opened the, welcoming members and guests attending in New York City and via teleconference from Syracuse and Albany. The agenda was approved. The minutes from the December 12, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted. The 2018 Annual Report was approved.

## **Vision of the New Chair**

Dr. Eddie Fergus reflected on the role of the Chair of the JJAG and overviewed his vision for the JJAG going forward. He identified three areas of focus. First, the alignment of systems with a specific focus on schools and the improvement of systems that will facilitate social mobility for youth. Second, the work around Raise the Age (RTA) to be mindful of the implications of no longer being treated like adults for youth and adjust the system to recognize youth development. Third, the repair and restoration of youth with an eye toward what has happened to youth prior to and during interaction with the system. Ms. Diaz echoed the need to consider what has brought youth to involvement with the juvenile justice system. Executive Deputy Commissioner Green recognized the alignment of Dr. Fergus's vision with the mission and vision of DCJS.

### **Integrating the expertise of the new members**

Dr. Fergus will be asking for a brief biography from JJAG members to recognize the expertise of members and influence of lived experience as an opportunity to leverage expertise and experience in the future work of the JJAG. Ms. Diaz requested that the biographies be uploaded to the DCJS JJAG website. Mr. Andriola offered to look into uploading the biographies.

## **JJAG By-Laws**

### **Alignment with Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA)**

Mr. Andriola highlighted the few changes to the JJAG By-Laws that are necessary to align with the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA). A draft of the by-laws with the necessary changes, including updating language and raising the age of youth members, was shared. The changes to the by-laws were approved.

## **Staff Updates**

### **Federal Funding Status Update**

Deputy Commissioner Bender provided a federal funding status update. All but \$780,000 of funds have been committed over the last five years. The two largest commitments currently are the Youth Justice Institute (YJI) and Regional Youth Justice Teams (RYJTs). The proposals that will be reviewed will be coming out of the balance of funds.

Executive Deputy Commissioner Green provided an update on the status of federal funding from 2018 and 2019. There are two streams of funding affected: Byrne JAG (2019) and Title II (2018). The federal government attached immigration requirements to these years of funding related to providing immigration information to

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Several cities and states objected to the attachment of those conditions. Lawsuits were filed across the country. The initial lawsuit filed by DCJS in relation to the 2017 Byrne JAG money got a favorable ruling in the district court that allowed the money to be awarded without the immigration conditions. DCJS was able to begin spending the money. Last week, the Second Circuit Court of New York overturned the District Court ruling. This creates an issue for the United States Supreme Court. DCJS is working to navigate the best path forward regarding this issue. This means that the 2017 Byrne JAG money is unavailable to be spent any further and it is unclear what will happen for the money that has already been spent. The same issue is present for the 2018 Title II money. The 2019 Title II money was received, but is not available to be spent yet. It is unclear if the same stipulations are going to be attached to the 2020 Title II funds. This creates a state of uncertainty for funding under the current administration.

Ms. Richmond asked what the implications are for programs. The 2015 and 2016 money is being spent currently. At this point, it is very unclear what the implications will be for 2017-2019 money. The hope is that no money will need to recall funding provided to programs, although it is unclear. It is unprecedented for the federal government to try to recall money. It is unclear if NYS will take the risk or put a freeze on spending until there is greater resolution of this issue. There should be greater clarity by the June meeting on the 2017 Byrne JAG and 2018 Title II money. The decision on the appeal of the court decision will take a few months (e.g. request a review from Second Circuit Court or appeal directly to the U.S. Supreme Court). If there is a change in administration, this issue might become a moot point and provide the quickest resolution of this issue.

The only funding that is currently affected is \$900,000 to the RYJTs that is allocated in the FY18 money.

This creates concerns from Ms. Diaz about approving funding proposals. The approval process will proceed, so that when decisions are made on funding, the proposals can move forward. Dr. Fergus raised a concern about how the JJAG work can move forward in substantive ways with funding so uncertain. Business will proceed as usual with careful attention given to the unusual circumstances.

#### Title II Application

DCJS is moving forward with a 2020 Title II application despite uncertainty about funding stipulations. The 2020 Title II application is currently in process and is due at the end of March.

#### Interim Grant Approval: My Brother's Keeper Symposium

Assistant Commissioner Alston provided an overview of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Symposium, a statewide symposium occurring in Albany in April to bring together grant funded programs and communities that are focused on boys and youth men of color across NYS. There is training provided on leadership, partnering with government agencies, partnering with community based organizations. A youth summit will occur. Seventy MBK Fellows will be inducted to be leaders in their communities.

Deputy Commissioner Owens stated that this is the second year that DCJS is looking at partnering with MBK and supporting the symposium. This is an interim proposal so no approval was sought.

#### Proposal #1: Youth Summit Attendance

Ms. Deame overviewed the Youth Summit proposal, which would support youth members to attend the Youth Summit provided by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice in Tacoma, WA. This is an opportunity to connect youth across states and build skills. There is an influx of youth members to the JJAG who would benefit from attending the Youth Summit and building rapport together. The JJAG is being asked to look at the Colorado Model for the youth members on the JJAG, which would allocate a specific dollar amount to youth members to decide how to program. This conference is facilitated by young people to teach young people. Ms. Lugo reflected on her attendance to the conference in 2018, highlighting a youth from the community who was empowered to start college upon returning from the summit.

No additional comments or feedback were provided. The proposal was approved.

#### Proposal #2: Center for Children's Law and Policy Project Extension

The Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) has been working with Office of Youth Justice (OYJ) to create the state's three year plan for Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED). The state has been in compliance with the RED plan for the last three years. CCLP was instrumental in assisting with developing the plan. They began work on developing a Policy Equity Academy, similar to Georgetown, housed at YJI. However, funding expired prior to finalizing this project. Under this model, teams throughout the state would be able to use their data to work through a process to develop and enact a capstone. This initiative will be targeted at a specific system point. The first round will be targeted at improving equity at the adjustment point in NYS. OYJ would like to bring their expertise back to finalize the Policy Equity Academy. The RED Advisory Committee identified three priority areas: development of a bench card on topics related to equity, identification of best practices for data collection around equity, development of best practices for a blinding process to increase equity in decision making processes. This proposal would bring CCLP in for the next two years to support all of these initiatives.

Deputy Commissioner Maccarone echoes support for the critical need of this work in the juvenile justice system. Dr. Fergus further supported the need for this concentrated work to manage bias within the system.

No additional comments or feedback were provided. The proposal was approved.

#### Proposal #3: Rural Communities of Practice

Ms. Armstrong overviewed the rural communities of practice proposal. At the last meeting, a program overview of this initiative was provided. Two teams are working to eliminate any turn back to the federal government and the program will end in March. The proposal seeks to bring in a competitively procured consultant to evaluate the work that occurred in the second phase, reconvene the stakeholders from this initiative, and facilitate learning opportunities for participating communities (e.g. in-person convening, online webinars, online learning community, etc.).

Ms. Richmond asked who did this work previously. There was a competitively procured consultant, John Rosiak, for phase one previously. In phase two, OYJ provided the support to the communities. Deputy Commissioner Maccarone requested information on the phase two work, which Ms. Armstrong offered to share via e-mail. No additional comments or feedback were provided. The motion was approved.

#### Youth Justice Institute (YJI)

Dr. Giza Lopes presented an update on the Youth Justice Institute (YJI). She thanked partners at DCJS, OCFS and JJAG members for their support of YJI. The goal is for the YJI to become the premiere source for evidence-

based practice in youth justice nationally and beyond. All of the work at the YJI is oriented around five strategic steps: serve as an information hub for stakeholders, cultivate and support practitioners' commitment to evidence-based practices (EBP), develop a prolific and ever-growing network of research expertise, foster and sustain synergy among stakeholders and others, and leverage current public investment to attract external funding that will enable YJI to grow.

In alignment with serving as an information hub initiative, the YJI has developed a newsletter, website, social media presence and a promotional video. To cultivate and support EBP, the new website will provide a ranked EBP repository, training and technical assistance on a variety of youth justice topics will be a focus, continuing education will be provided through certificate programs and policy academies, a Bridges program to connect agencies in need of support with researchers and scholars that can support their work and apply implementation science to variety of projects. To create a network of research expertise, internship and independent study opportunities have been implemented, the affiliated faculty pool is being expanded, original research will be conducting and networking will be active nationally and locally. To foster and sustain synergy among stakeholders, the YJI will host RYJT Co-Chair Convenings, workshops, retreats, a webinar series and a podcast series. To attract external funding, the YJI has submitted an Arnold Ventures application with the Global Youth Justice, Inc. to do a randomized control trial of youth courts and partner with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) on juvenile defense training.

Dr. Alston shared that MBK is also starting a podcast and has offered support to the YJI in their endeavor. Dr. Lopes expressed the desire for greater youth participation on the YJI Board.

#### Best Practice Guidelines for Police and Community Partners

Mr. Andriola provided an overview of the initiative to operationalize a plan for developing and implementing EBPs for policing youth. The initial thought is to launch with a two-day summit in the Fall, possibly in conjunction with DCJS's law enforcement symposium. There will be a discussion with Office of Public Safety (OPS) to identify which practitioners should be engaged in the development of this strategy and guide implementation in their communities.

#### JJAG Strategic Plan

The previous strategic plan was circulated to begin to frame the development of the new strategic plan that will also integrate the perspectives of new JJAG members. The process for strategic planning has followed the same rhythm, initiating with a retreat to concentrate time and thinking around where the strategies and priorities are for DCJS, research and practice.

A steering committee developed an action plan in 2011 that established the RYJTs, the infrastructure for the YJI and data sharing infrastructures. The retreats in subsequent years have identified priority areas. The most recent strategic planning retreat identified five priority areas: seeking statewide alignment, high priority populations, accountability process and measurement, JJAG optimal function and effectiveness

Examples of activities to support the priority areas include the YJI, RYJTs, Partnership for Youth Justice (PYJ), Georgetown Certificate Programs, development of trainings and curriculums, implementation of evidence-based practices statewide (e.g. restorative practices, youth with sexual behavior problems, etc.), grant funding to produce youth that are better off, etc. Six new members have been added to the JJAG, including higher youth representation.

Executive Deputy Commissioner Green discussed the opportunity that DCJS has had to transform practice through Raise the Age (RTA). There has been an increase in funding for preventative youth justice initiatives. The result is greater than the legislation alone, but demonstrates the collaborative effort to improve youth experience and outcome in the justice system. Looking at the list, there has been a lot of work done in many of these areas. The JJAG is part of the collective effort to support this work across all of these areas. First Deputy Commissioner White tasked the group with identifying priority areas for future work if and when the funding begins to flow again. There is great alignment statewide to serve as the vehicle to move this work forward that might mitigate the need for an external consultant to facilitate strategic planning. There are also more data available to aid in the decision making process that will increase the efficiency of targeted funding initiatives. One method for doing this is through a Models of Change framework that solicits information from various stakeholders to triangulate data and expertise to arrive at the top list of priorities for youth justice in NYS.

In relation to next step for strategic planning, Dr. Fergus raised that the JJAG must consider the need for an external consultant to facilitate the strategic planning and if a subcommittee for planning the retreat (e.g. logistics, invitees, etc.) should be established. If a consultant is used to facilitate the process, it should be an individual that has a background and expertise in youth justice. What are the most effective ways for the JJAG to support or enhance the existing work that is ongoing in lieu of creating a separate path which would necessitate an external facilitator? If no consultant is utilized, there needs to be a structure to setting up the retreat and distributing the work among JJAG members. First Deputy Commissioner White proposed working with the Office of Justice Performance and Research (OJRP) to develop a survey to collect feedback and comments from all JJAG members and to gather initial ideas to guide next steps. JJAG members will receive an invitation to join a subcommittee for facilitating the strategic planning session and developing the survey.

### **Wrap-up and Next Steps**

The meeting was adjourned by JJAG Chair, Dr. Eddie Fergus. The next meeting is scheduled for June 16<sup>th</sup> in Albany.

***The next JJAG Board meeting will be held Tuesday, June 16, 2020: 10:00am – 1:00 pm in Albany.***