

**Joint Meeting of the  
Juvenile Services Committee and the  
Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

August 8, 2017

9:00am – 3:00 pm

Southeast Community College, Rooms U-104 &106  
8800 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68520

**1. Call to Order**

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Kim Hawekotte and Nicole Brundo, Co-Chairs of the Juvenile Services Committee (Committee), along with Cassy Blakely and Elaine Menzel, Chair and Vice Chair of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

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**Juvenile Services Committee**

***Committee Members Present (10)***

Jim Bennett	Kim Hawekotte	Vicky Thompson Smith
Cassy Blakely	Cynthia Kennedy	Dr. Richard Wiener
Nicole Brundo	Aubrey Mancuso*	
Judge Larry Gendler	Tom McBride	

***Committee Members Absent (6)***

Dr. Anne Hobbs	Mark LaBouchardiere	Dan Scarborough
Nick Juliano	Kari Rumbaugh	Dr. Ken Zoucha

***Committee Resource Members Present (5)***

Michele Borg	Jerall Moreland (arrived 9:12)	Deb VanDyke-Ries
Christine Henningsen	Julie Smith	

***Committee Resource Members Absent (10)***

Nicole Berggren	Monica Miles-Steffens	Julie Rogers
Barb Fitzgerald	Lisa Neeman	Rico Zavala
Catherine Gekas Steeby	Senator Patty Pansing Brooks	
Liz Hruska	Judge Linda Porter	

**A quorum was established for the Juvenile Services Committee**

\*Aubrey Mancuso served as a temporary proxy designated by Juliet Summers

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

***Coalition Members Present (11)***

Cassy Blakely	Kim Hawekotte	Michelle Schindler
Jim Blue	Denise Kracl	Amanda Speichert (arrived 9:35)
Neleigh Boyer	Brett Matthies (arrived 10:56)	Kevin Spencer
Tiffany Gressley	Elaine Menzel	

***Coalition Members Absent (10)***

Mark Benne	Mark LaBouchardiere	Nicola Variano
John-Robert Bloom	Justin Myers	Corben Waldron
Darrell Fisher	Chris Rodgers	
Brain Halstead	Dan Scarborough	

***Coalition Ex-Officio Members Present (3)***

Jeanne Brandner	Judge Vernon Daniels	Judge Randin Roland
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**A quorum was established for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice upon the arrival of Brett Matthies at 10:56 a.m.**

**Guests in Attendance (16):**

Amoreena Brady.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Nathan Busch.....	Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Bethany Connor Allen.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Mike Fargen.....	Nebraska Crime Commission
Amanda Felton.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Lori Griggs.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Mary Ann Havey.....	Nebraska Court Improvement Project
Bernie Hascall.....	DHHS, Division of Behavioral Health
Amy Hoffman.....	Nebraska Crime Commission
Sara Hoyle.....	Lincoln/Lancaster County Human Services
Vanessa Humaran.....	Nebraska Crime Commission
Matt Lewis.....	Nebraska Court Improvement Project
Megan Patel.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Bruce Prenda.....	Lancaster County Attorney’s Office
Chris Triebisch.....	Nebraska Legislative Council
Russ Uhing.....	Lincoln Public Schools

*a. Notice of Publication*

Amanda Felton, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Children’s Commission and Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

*b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meeting Act information*

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located on the sign-in table near the front of the meeting room

**3. Approval of Agenda**

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**A motion was made by Judge Larry Gendler and seconded by Kim Hawekotte to approve the agenda as presented.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (10):**

Jim Bennett	Kim Hawekotte	Vicky Thompson Smith
Cassy Blakely	Cynthia Kennedy	Dr. Richard Wiener
Nicole Brundo	Aubrey Mancuso	
Judge Larry Gendler	Tom McBride	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

Dr. Anne Hobbs	Mark LaBouchardiere	Dan Scarborough
Nick Juliano	Kari Rumbaugh	Dr. Ken Zoucha

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

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*a. Minutes of the March 13, 2017 NCJJ Meeting*

**It was moved by Elain Menzel and seconded by Michelle Schindler to approve the March 13, 2017 NCJJ minutes and the June 13, 2017 joint OJS Committee and NCJJ meeting minutes.** No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (9):**

Cassy Blakely	Tiffany Gressley	Elaine Menzel
Jim Blue	Kim Hawekotte	Michelle Schindler
Neleigh Boyer	Denise Kracl	Kevin Spencer

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (12):**

Mark Benne

John-Robert Bloom

Darrell Fisher

Brain Halstead

Mark LaBouchardiere

Brett Matthies

Justin Myers

Chris Rodgers

Dan Scarborough

Amanda Speichert

Nicola Variano

Corben Waldron

**MOTION FAILED as a quorum was not in attendance.**

*b. Minutes of the June 13, 2017 joint OJS Committee and NCJJ Meeting*

**It was moved by Judge Larry Gendler and seconded by Kim Hawekotte to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2017 joint meeting of the OJS Committee and the NCJJ.** No further discussion ensued.

**MOTION CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.**

## **5. Co-Chair's Report**

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Chair Blakely thanked everyone for making it to the meeting. She explained that she had spent the last several weeks contacting each member to explain the new process and the shift in meeting schedules.

## **6. Probation Update**

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*a. Service Definitions*

Jeanne Brandner, Deputy Administrator and Jim Bennett, Director of Placement - Supervision Services, provided an update on the [service definitions](#) and [guidelines](#). The definitions had undergone two periods of public comment and implementation had begun on July 1, 2017. The ultimate hope was to be able to track service availability and needs through automatic referrals. Given the strenuous task this was for IT staff, no timelines had been established for this goal. Members also inquired as to if services were broken down by availability across the state. Mr. Bennett explained that a [service catalog](#) was available on their website that broke down the services provided by district which updated regularly.

Discussion transitioned to the topic of the Professional Foster Care service offered by juvenile probation. Julie Smith, Reentry Specialist, explained that the Request for Quotation had been distributed in the last week of July and would have a closing date at the end of August. The service definition was available in draft form, and would be finalized as service providers began to be selected. The service would be not have a specific district for pilot implementation, but rather, would depend on the location of qualifying providers. Ms. Smith clarified that the Professional Foster Care offered through probation was not the same as the Medicaid reimbursable Treatment Foster Care being discussed in other groups.

*b. Graduated Response Grid*

Mr. Bennett introduced Amoreena Brady, Juvenile Justice Specialist, who discussed the recent efforts to create a [graduated response grid](#). Ms. Brady explained that while sanctions had been an option previously for technical violations, but that incentives for to encourage positive behavior was a new addition with the passing of LB8 and the creation of the grid. After researching several states performing best practices, the grid was formatted to have sanctions and incentives that fluctuated for individual youth. Factors such as risk level and domains effected by a youth's behaviors, influenced the level of incentive or sanction to be given.

Ms. Brady noted that the handout was an "at-a-glance" grid and that a training guide and roll-out policy were still in progress. While the guide was still in draft form and had not been shared externally, but it would be shared with the group once it was available for external review. While final implementation would depend heavily on IT support, there was hope to have the grid and training guide implemented in 2018. Amoreena indicated that feedback on the initial grid would be collected over the next 6-8 weeks.

## **7. Lancaster County Truancy Diversion Program**

Guest speakers Bruce Prenda, Chief Deputy to the Lancaster County Attorney's Office, Juvenile Division, and Russ Uhing, Director of Student Services at Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), introduced themselves to members. Mr. Prenda took a moment to also acknowledge Sara Hoyle, Director of Lincoln/Lancaster County Human Services. The presentation began with Mr. Prenda sharing the [PowerPoint presentation](#) that Judge Reggie Ryder created to share with families and youth interested in truancy diversion. Judge Ryder had initiated the truancy diversion program several years prior in cooperation with LPS.

Mr. Prenda discussed how the pilot program had been launched at Park Middle School in 2011 and expanded to Lincoln High School in 2013. Currently the program operated at Park, Lincoln High, Goodrich, North Star, Culler, and Northeast High. The central focus of the program is the student with supporting roles surrounding them. Services began the first day of court with a social worker to help the family find and utilize services. Each student was provided in-home service through Omni and are given incentives for doing well in the program.

The presenters explained that having social workers in the school full-time had greatly attributed to the decrease of youth participating in the program. With the social worker in the school, a proactive approach could be taken to connect with the youth when early signs of truancy began. The ultimate goal is to keep youth with only truancy behavior from moving deeper into the juvenile justice system.

Members inquired if an evaluation had been done on the program and Ms. Hoyle indicated that one was in progress through UNL's Center for Children, Family, and the Law. Other issues discussed included the increased risk for truancy with lower parental participation, the increase in recent years of mental health issues in youth, and the use of braided funding from community, county, and LPS funds to support the program.

## **8. District 3J JIFF Pilot Project and Truancy Unit**

The group welcomed Megan Patel, Probation Supervisory, and Lori Griggs, Chief Probation Officer to present on the district 3J Juvenile Inventory for Functioning (JIFF) Pilot and their truancy unit. The presenters discussed the impact of the shift of youth from DHHS to Probation under LB561. Within the Lancaster truancy unit, there were 6 officers that worked with the youth after adjudication. The goal was to decrease both the amount of time a youth spends under court observation and the number of youth in out-of-home placements. In conjunction with partnership meetings with the youth, parents, and school, the JIFF tool was utilized with this population. The JIFF tool was a self-assessment completed by the youth and parents to help identify the underlying issues and needs of the youth.

## **9. Joint Legislative Workgroup Update**

Workgroup Co-Chair and Staff Attorney with the Center on Children, Family and the Law, Christine Henningsen, provided an update on the work of the joint Legislative Workgroup. The workgroup had recently met and discussed the issue of youth under 11 who could no longer be filed under a status or delinquency petition. The group planned to examine data from DHHS to see how many youth were affected by the change. Ms. Henningsen also mentioned the workgroup's want to continue to communicate with different providers and to be responsive to community needs prior to making any suggestions.

Conversation transitioned to the need to examine placement and service options for youth. In particular, behavioral and mental health targeted services and placements were mentioned as a high need. There was also the issue of youth in detention facilities for long periods of time due to a lack of appropriate placement elsewhere. Other topics covered included the need to better monitor the medication of the youth as they transition from placements, the need for an individualized approach to placement and services, and the need for a graduated continuum of care.

## **10. Grant Recipient Program Presentation – Hope Center**

Alyssa Smith, Regional Program Director with the Hope Center, thanked the members for having her. She informed the group that Hope Center had originally been formed by the late Reverend Ty Schenzel to address the issue of hopelessness in children and youth. The organization used strategies such as educational supports, employability training, and youth development.

Ms. Smith [reviewed](#) the strategies the program employed including providing involved support to youth and families, providing funding and opportunities to visit colleges, preparing youth for SAT and ACT tests, offering employment opportunities through the organization's Learning Academy and a partnership with Gallup, and helping youth learn

valuable social, employment, and leadership skills to transition into a successful adulthood. Areas of focus moving forward included strengthening the bridge to permanent employment and to look into the possibility of expanding the program from 2-year participation to 3 years.

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### **11. Lunch**

The Committee recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m.

The meeting resumed business at 12:25 p.m.

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### **12. System of Care and Crisis Response**

Presenters for the System of Care initiative included Nathan Busch, Associate Vice President, Systems of Care (SOC) and Native American Connections with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and Bernie Hascall, System of Care Administrator with DHHS, Division of Behavioral Health. Mr. Busch shared a [presentation](#) on the SOC and explained that the concept of System of Care had emerged in the 1980s to promote interagency collaboration to help make systems successful. The presenters outlined the priority outcomes which included lowering the average age of first system contact, reducing the percentage of youth placed out-of-home, decreasing the average annual cost per youth, and improved school attendance rate.

The structure of the work was reviewed, outlining the many boards and committees working to gather input, spread awareness, and ensure collaboration. They went on to talk about the mobile youth crisis response which had gone statewide May 1<sup>st</sup>. So far, the initiative had served 64 youth allowing 52 to be supported in-home. Other efforts for the future included working to ensure that varied cultural and linguistic services were available and to create a clinical profile to determine the service gaps and needs. Work had already begun that looked data on where services and trainings were offered, who provided them, and how often they were done. The results were already showing areas of duplication.

Funding for the SOC initiative included Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant funds to target the high needs youth and funding through the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and their Community Collaboration efforts. Mr. Busch offered to share additional information with the groups on the Community Response initiative happening within communities throughout the state. Members questioned the sustainability of the SOC efforts. The presenters explained that the data gathered in the early stages would help identify the divisions who take advantage of what services and help to provide support to establish a sustainable foundation that would save on expenses in the long run. They did emphasize the need for system partners to come together and to acknowledge the need for services and the necessary contributions to maintain them.

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### **13. OJS Committee Workgroup Updates**

#### *a. Data Mapping and Analysis Taskforce*

Mike Fargen, Co-Chair of the Data Mapping and Analysis (DMA) Taskforce and Chief of Information Services with the Nebraska Crime Commission, provided a [presentation](#) on the past work of the group. The taskforce had looked at the average estimated distance traveled to placements. Mr. Fargen noted the need for a higher level of analysis on the data and explained the complications that came with inaccurate historical data on placement types.

Previous data was already out of date, and fresh information would need to be pulled. When gathering information, Fargen explained the benefit of pulling in additional sources. Members were interested to see if data could be pulled that would show the recommended placement vs. the actual placement, if location of charges for the youth 11 and under could be identified, and to identify where the lower risk and lower age filings were occurring. The question was asked as to if it could be determined if a youth had been offered diversion prior to out-of-home placement. Mr. Fargen explained that with enough data, this could be examined down the road. He discussed the work in progress to link up the information from Community Based Aid (CBA) and the JUSTICE data system.

#### *b. Evaluation of Programs and Assessment of Youth Workgroup*

Dr. Richard Wiener, Chair of the Workgroup and Beddy Professor of Psychology at UNL, went over the efforts of the workgroup including stakeholder education and a survey to look at screening and assessment tools across the state. The group had not met recently, but would hopefully have additional information at the next meeting in October.

c. *Service Coordination Workgroup*

An update on the progress of the workgroup was provided by Vicky Thompson Smith, Workgroup Chair and Associate Director of CEDARS. Ms. Thompson Smith explained that the group was no longer meeting and felt as though their work and recommendations had reached a point of completion. Members agreed that the workgroup should be archived.

d. *YRTC and Out-of-Home Placement Update*

Discussion spawned on the need for a greater focus on the transition services available to youth between placements. There was a desire to examine these issues and it was agreed that this Workgroup would now look at all out-of-home placements as the transitions that were necessary between them as well as when returning home. Vicky Thompson Smith agreed to Co-Chair this workgroup. A co-chair from the NCJJ would be identified at a later time.

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#### **14. NCJJ Subcommittee Updates**

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a. *Executive Subcommittee*

Cassy Blakely noted that the membership positions on the NCJJ were open for non-profit representatives from district 2 and 3 were both open. Blakely encouraged members to forward application information to anyone they felt would be a good fit for the Coalition.

b. *Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee*

Elaine Menzel, Subcommittee Chair and Legal Counsel for the Nebraska Association of County Officials, informed the members that they would be meeting at the end of August to start discussions on the upcoming CBA application processes. The subcommittee would be split into teams of 2-3 to review all plans and examine them for statutory and regulatory compliance.

c. *Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee*

Subcommittee Chair and Colfax County Attorney, Denise Kracl, provide information on the work of the Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee. The group had met on June 29<sup>th</sup> and had discussed the statewide diversion meetings. The group was looking to schedule a YouthThrive training opportunity and would also be looking at examining county and city attorney training.

d. *Grant Review Subcommittee*

Kim Howekotte noted that the Grant Review Subcommittee would be meeting later that week to review RFPs. There would be a presentation at the October meeting on the CBA program report.

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#### **15. Public Comment**

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Co-Chair Hawekotte invited members of the public to offer comment. No comments were given.

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#### **16. New Business**

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Judge Gendler took an opportunity to discuss a [recent article](#) on the research around smartphone use and mental health in adolescents. He informed members that he would share the article with them after the meeting.

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#### **17. Upcoming Meeting Planning**

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Members with suggestions for agenda topics should forward their ideas to Commission or Coalition staff.

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#### **18. Future Meeting Dates**

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The next joint meeting of the OJS Committee and the NCJJ was scheduled for Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> with a location yet to be finalized, but would most likely be at the Nebraska State Office Building in Lincoln.

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#### **19. Adjourn**

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The meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.