

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

November 14, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Nebraska Association of County Officials Building,
1335 H Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Lincoln, NE 68508

1. Call to Order

Cassy Blakely, Chairperson of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Juvenile Services Committee

Committee Members Present (9)

Nicole Brundo
A'Jamal Byndon
Tamara Gavin*

Kim Hawekotte (11:55 a.m.)
Tom McBride
Kelli Schadwinkel

Bobbi Taylor (11:00 a.m.)
Vicki Thompson Smith
Deb VanDyke-Ries

Committee Members Absent (7)

Michelle Borg
Judge Larry Gendler
Nick Juliano

Mark LaBouchardiere
Patrick Sailors
Dan Scarborough

Dr. Richard Wiener

Committee Resource Members Present (4)

Nicole Berggren
Lisa Neeman
Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks (9:20 a.m.)
Julie Smith

Committee Resource Members Absent (0)

A quorum was not established for the Juvenile Services Committee

*Let it be noted for the record that Tamara Gavin appointed Lisa Neeman as her temporary proxy for the meeting.

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Coalition Members Present (9)

Cassy Blakely
Neleigh Boyer
Patrick Connell

Brian Halstead
Kim Hawekotte (11:55 a.m.)
Denise Kracl

Elaine Menzel
Sheli Schindler
Bobbi Taylor (11:00 a.m.)

Coalition Members Absent (10)

Roma Amundson
Don Arp
CesShandra Davis
Greg Gonzalez

Janteice Holston
Brett Matthies
Justin Myers
Amanda Speichert

Lorlei Stark
Rico Zavala

Coalition Ex-Officio Members Present (0)

Coalition Ex-Officio Members Absent (3)

Judge Vernon Daniels
Judge Randin Roland
Kari Rumbaugh

A quorum was not established for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice.

Guests in Attendance (5):

Adam AndersonNebraska Children’s Commission
Amy Hoffman.....Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Chris Jones.....Nebraska Children’s Commission
Sara Quiroz.....Administrative Office of Courts and Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Chris Triebsch.....Office of Senator Patty Pansing Brooks
Dustin Zabokrtsky.....Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

a. Notice of Publication

Chairperson of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice, Cassy Blakely, 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 entrance of the meeting room.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Discussion of agenda items did not follow the order of the proposed agenda. The agenda was not voted upon.

4. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the [August 29, 2019 Minutes](#) was postponed until the next meeting, at a time when a quorum can be reached.

5. Tour of Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility Report Out

Juvenile Services Committee Member, Nicole Berggren updated to committee regarding the October 14th tour of the NCYF in Omaha. The facilities were toured by Members Nicole Berggren, Jeanne Brandner, Judge Larry Gendler, and Mark LaBouchardiere. While at the facility they visited with one youth who happened to be in the area during the tour. The youth didn’t have much to say about out of home placements, only that he had been to DCYC and then NCYF. Berggren noted to the Committee that the appearance of the facility was very nice. There is a large middle area where they do some classes about mindfulness, or if things get heated, the youth can sit by the fountain. Berggren relayed that the classrooms look like normal high school classrooms, and attendance is high. Additionally, NCYF provides Moral Reconation Training and ART groups, which are best practices. Berggren answered questions regarding the capacity being around 90, most youth being under the age of 19. Berggren also answered questions about programming. She will send out the demographics of the facility.

Chair Blakely added and encouraged the Committee and Coalition members to visit any of the youth detention centers, to get perspective of the youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Member Byndon added that it is important for the Committee and Coalition members to visit these facilities but also for small groups of youth with juvenile justice history to come to Committee meetings to share their experiences.

Member Schindler added that tours of larger groups of visitors might not be the best thing for the kids. The kids have let it be known at her facility that they feel like they are in a zoo when large groups tour in Lancaster County.

6. Legislative Update

Chair Blakely welcomed Senator Patty Pansing Brooks to the meeting for a legislative update. Senator Pansing Brooks updated the members regarding the work of her office. She relayed her strong intentions to pass a bill for juvenile's right to counsel statewide. Senator Pansing Brooks is also working on banning solitary confinement for juveniles. She noted that she has worked with the counties and has come to an agreement that will hopefully allow the bill to go through smoothly. Senator Pansing Brooks relayed to the Committee that herself and a few colleagues went on a surprise visit to YRTC Geneva to view the conditions. She shared the discouraging conditions that some youth were subject to, specifically three girls in solitary confinement. Senator Pansing Brooks also relayed information that the policy of using "room confinement" is blatantly false, and rather just another term for solitary confinement. Youth are being held in rooms with nothing else than a mattress and perhaps a couple items. Senator Pansing Brooks is also working on mandatory minimum sentencing to come in line with best practices across the county. Additionally, the Senator's office is looking at use of force with students, truancy, out of home placements, and juveniles sentenced to life without parole sentences while under the age of 19.

Senator Pansing Brooks also has concerns with the nearly 200 pages of DHHS regulations about children and families that were deleted. She believes it is important for advocates, youth, and families to have access to review these regulations. The reaction from the Legislature will be to be very specific in law the duties of protecting the most vulnerable population. Members noted that the regulations are currently in the "response to public hearing" phase.

Senator Pansing Brooks also updated the Members regarding the School Resource Officer (SRO) legislation. There are details that need clarified in the bill regarding the use and training of SROs. There have been scenarios where SROs are issuing citations and making arrests, rather than utilizing conflict resolution for a disciplinary issue. There is a Joint HHS and Judiciary Hearing regarding this issue on December 18th.

Member Sheli Schindler added information regarding YRTC, youth in detention, School Resource Offices, and youth that run away from placement. Member Brian Halstead added information regarding the Nebraska Department of Education Policy regarding SROs, disciplinary actions, and what scenarios require reporting to law enforcement. Member VanDyke-Reis added that Court Improvement Project is looking at their regional conferences for September/October next year, and they are looking to bring in Strategies for Youth to do training across the state. Additionally, CIP is working with the Office of Dispute Resolution for restorative practice training.

7. NRS §43-251.01 Implementation Update

JSC Co-Chair Nicole Brundo presented information regarding the changes in the juvenile detention law. Brundo noted that the numbers at the Douglas County Youth Center were historically around 70, and as of last week the numbers were 77, so in Douglas County the numbers of youth in detention have remained stable, however runs have increased. The numbers of youth in the adult system has increased due the severity of crimes committed while youth are on run. The recurrence of youth on run has frustrated law enforcement, as some youth are aware they are not able to be detained simply for being on run. Frustration has also increased due to the increased number of missing juvenile investigations opened each time a youth goes on run. Member Monica Miles-Steffens added that the number of youth in the adult system had been trending upward prior to the change in the law. The number of youth is around 50-60% on any given day. Members discussed community strategies regarding the changes in this law. Miles-Steffens also relayed information regarding Professional Foster Care, which is currently being implemented as a response for the need in short-term foster care in the event of youth on run. She also added information about communities accessing Crisis Response. Member Schindler added that the data regarding warrants may be on the increase while violations of conditional release may be on the decline depending on court locality. Schindler cautioned that the data may look different depending on enforcement by local courts.

8. Juvenile Detention Alternative Update

Monica Miles-Steffens presented information regarding implementation of the Juvenile Detention Alternative. She noted that because so much has changed in statute, that it is time to look at the detention tool again. Florida recently had statute change very similar to Nebraska's change. Because of the similarities, Probation is working with a researcher in Florida to help Nebraska through changes in the risk assessment and detention tool. Members noted that in looking at the tool it would be important to get stakeholder input. Members expressed gratitude for the work of Senator Pansing Brooks on legislation affecting families involved in juvenile justice.

Miles-Steffens continued by updating the Committees on the recently held National Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative conference. She noted that it was great to see all the innovative ways communities are helping families. The JDAI project of the Casey Foundation is very interested in network focus, innovation looking at racial disparity, and family engagement. Member Schindler noted the good things that are happening in Seattle, who hope to eliminate detention by 2030, and that Seattle has a very strong collaborative approach. Miles-Steffens noted that collaboration through JDAI Connect is a great way to gain knowledge and open communication with other communities. From a state perspective, JDAI will be posting their strategic plan for the next five years very soon. They would really like to explore Explorative Practice and community engagement. Member Schindler added that she believes we do good things and make good steps, however, other states are more vocal and passionate about disproportionate minority contact. Member Byndon added that transparency, community engagement, and accountability is very important. He continued that often complacency takes hold, and that the Committees need to continue to push to look at race and class, but getting data to support change is important.

9. Crossover Youth Update

Monica Miles-Steffens briefly updated the Committees on the Crossover Model collaboration between Probation and DHHS. DHHS and Probation are in the process of circling back around to the local leadership teams to get feedback on how this process is progressing. There have been some really great case-specific recommendations to the court recently, and there are occasions where this is not happening, so there is room for improvement. Miles-Steffens answered questions regarding the process for Crossover Youth.

10. YRTC Update

Dustin Zabokrtsky, DHHS Executive Strategic Advisor, updated members regarding the different phases of the YRTC changes. The first phase of the changes is the YRTC Business Plan. Zabokrtsky noted that DHHS has implemented a vision and laid out opportunities for improvement. He relayed information regarding treatment and new practices, including the Family Navigator, a resource coordinator who will connect families in the matters of health and education. For phase two, DHHS is looking at contracting a consulting firm to do a deep-dive on the YRTC system. Zabokrtsky noted DHHS is looking at a different type of staff for YRTC Lincoln. The third phase includes collaborative meetings happening monthly. These meetings involve various stakeholders to discuss how to work together and level set, and to look at the continuum of care, from entry to exit. Phase four is a campaign to reach out to public groups to have discussion and solicit input and future-state planning. The fifth phase would be future-state planning, including input from key stakeholders from education, juvenile justice, children and families.

Zabokrtsky answered questions regarding stakeholders, public comment, and YRTC staffing. Member Bobbi Taylor raised the issue regarding YRTC youth with children and the end of programs and spaces for children. Nicole Berggren answered that there is a plan to implement Today's Fathers Program. Taylor added that there is a level of trauma when youth are in detention and not able to make a bond with a newborn baby, and that youth are in foster care have near complete autonomy over their newborn children. Zabokrtsky added that he welcomes any input provided to him and DHHS.

Chair Blakely added that a lack of services for mental health and substance abuse services statewide is really at the heart of the matter regarding the YRTC system. Members brought up information regarding the failed construction of a facility in Kearney that came out of the LB542 Task Force in the mid-90s.

11. Nebraska Crime Commission Update / Title II Funds

NCJJ Member Amy Hoffman updated Members on the process of applying for Title II funds. Three youth members have been appointed. One, potentially two members are needed, depending on the interpretation of the law, in order to ensure that youth voice is heard. Chair Blakely encouraged submissions for youth applications to the Coalition, but noted that any youth voice is welcome to attend. Hoffman added that there is ongoing discussion regarding compliance and violations as it relates to rejoining, and whether the amount of money received would be based on violations in 2016 or if there would be a fresh start. Members discussed the requirements, compliance, violations from 2016, and benefits from rejoining. Chair Blakely noted that one benefit from rejoining would be that there would then be some money to monitor some of the core issues across the state. Members discussed another benefit of rejoining being that it keeps data and enforcement of the requirements in front of the Coalition and Crime Commission for compliance. The Executive Committee will look at doing a cost/benefit analysis, to determine what rejoining will do. Every state is waiting for guidance on the federal statute.

12. Strategic Priorities

Co-chairs announced to the group that in January the committee will look at strategic planning. Staff Member Anderson will send out a Survey Monkey regarding priority issues.

Chair Blakely added that work on the Suicide Prevention Group is continuing, with meetings scheduled for next week.

13. Public Comment

The Co-Chairs opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was provided.

14. New Business

Chair Blakely opened the floor for new business. There was none.

15. Upcoming Meeting Planning

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| a. January 30, 2019 9:00 am to 1:00 pm | c. July 30, 2020 9:00 am to 1:00 pm |
| b. April 2, 2020 9:00 am to 1:00 pm | d. October 29, 2020 9:00 am to 1:00 pm |

16. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson