

Arkansas Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth and Families



Juvenile Justice Reform Subcommittee Minutes October 15, 2014

Subcommittee Members in Attendance

Hon. Rhonda Wood, Chair
Hon. Gary Isbell
Hon. Bobby McCallister
Scott Tanner
Keesa Smith
Paul Kelly
Paula Stone

Other Attendees

Chief Justice Jim Hannah, Chair of Commission
Michelle Griffin (in place of Deborah Coffman)
Connie Hickman Tanner
Kate Shufeldt

CALL TO ORDER

Hon. Rhonda Wood called the meeting to order.

AGENDA TOPICS

Welcome & Introductions: Hon. Rhonda Wood

Hon. Rhonda Wood thanked the committee members for their service and asked the group to introduce themselves. The group also discussed other potential members including a prosecutor. Later in the discussion, law enforcement, a psychologist, and a DCFS staff member were added to the list of potential members. Judge Wood stressed that the subcommittee members are free to bring in other staff in their departments to help work on the committee.

Juvenile Justice Reform: Judge Rhonda Wood and Committee discussion

Judge Wood gave the group the action plan developed by the Arkansas Committee on Educational Stability as an example of the type of plan intended for the committee. She led a discussion of the four principles the Arkansas Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth and Families adopted from the white paper on *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*.

The four principles are:

Principle 1: Base supervision, service and resource allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and needs assessments.

Principle 2: Adopt and effectively implement programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, and use data to evaluate the results and direct system improvements,

Principle 3: Employ a coordinated approach across service systems to address youth's needs

Principle 4: Tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents.

Regarding Principle 1, there was discussion on the need for a validated form to be used when the youth first comes into contact with law enforcement and throughout their time involved in the courts. It should be used in consideration for diversion programming. There was discussion of the need to have a uniform risk assessment that is used across agencies. Arkansas currently has a risk assessment, but it is not validated and is only utilized when a youth is being considered for commitment to the Division of Youth Services. Connie discussed a grant in which Arkansas has been asked to apply. The

grant would cover the implementation of validated risk assessments that also include substance abuse and mental health screens. The grant is part of a project between OJJDP and MacArthur Foundation.

Regarding Principle 2, the group agreed that there are issues with data collection and data sharing across agencies. Connie stated that the AOC is in the process of reviewing all of their data collection tools and would like the committee's input on potential changes to the Delinquency Cover Sheet that must be entered by the clerk into the court's database. Currently, the cover sheet includes information to be completed at filing as well as disposition. The group discussed separating the form into two- one for filing and one for disposition so that there is less confusion about who is responsible for the data collection and entering. Connie stated that this was also suggested by the National Center for State Courts. Keesa stated that the Department of Human Services has struggled with data sharing between their divisions and are working to improve it.

The group discussed Principles 3 and 4 simultaneously. Judge Wood acknowledged that coordinated approaches were a large task to address. The group members discussed which principles they may be more interested in working on once the plan is developed and moving forward. The group agreed that the grant application is the top priority because without it, other funding would need to be acquired.

The group agreed to send Kate recommendations for goals and objectives by November 10. Kate will then compile the recommendations into a draft plan for discussion at the next meeting.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Objectives emailed to Kate (kate.shufeldt@arkansas.gov)	Commissioners	11/10/2014
Develop draft plan and send to committee for review	Kate	11/17/2014

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 21, 2014 from 10:00-12:30 at the Justice Building in Little Rock.