



**Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission  
Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family  
1700 West Washington Street, Suite 230, Phoenix, Arizona 85007**

A general meeting of the Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission (AJJC) was convened September 3, 2020, via teleconference, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (16)	
Cindi Nannetti, Chair	Vada Jo Phelps
Earl Newton	Tracy Darmody
Jane Kallal	Dorothy Wodraska
Jason Holmberg	Robert Thomas
Mary Therese “TC” Colla proxy for Joseph Kelroy	Shawn Cox
Maria Dodge	Helen Gándara
Don Walker	Jeff Hood
Nicole Schuren	Christi Shelton proxy for Michael Faust
Staff/Guests Present (7)	Members Absent (10)
Kate Howard, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections	Guadalupe Durazo
Howard Wykes, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections	Tom Callahan
Priscilla Benkhe, MCAASA	Jose Gonzales
Anthony Gonzalez, MCAASA	James Molina
Tatyana Ware, MCAASA	Dennis Pickering
Steve Selover, GOYFF	Joseph Grossman
Kim Brooks, GOYFF	Mindy Flannery
	Alice Bustillo
	Shaun Rieve
	Heather Carter

**Call to Order**

- Ms. Cindi Nannetti, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. with 16 members and seven staff and guests present.
  - Ms. Nannetti provided instructions to members for teleconference meetings.
  - Ms. Nannetti advised members of the public to submit their comments through the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family website.

**Introductions**

- Ms. Nannetti, Chair, asked members to acknowledge their attendance during roll call.

**Approval of Minutes,**

- Ms. Nannetti, Chair, requested a motion to approve the June 4, 2020, meeting minutes.
  - Ms. Vada Phelps motioned to accept the minutes as drafted.
  - Ms. Dorothy Wodraska seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

## Title II Program Update-Be Awesome Youth Mentoring Project

- **Ms. Priscilla Benkhe**, executive director of the Maricopa Community Alliance Against Substance Abuse, provided a status update on the Title II funded Be Awesome Youth Mentoring program in the city of Maricopa.
- **Ms. Benkhe** explained the various types of school-based mentoring services offered in the program, including individual and group mentoring.
  - While mentoring is paired by gender, the program will also provide limited interaction with mentors of the opposite gender to establish positive connections for youth lacking a mother or father in the home.
  - Community based mentoring by Maricopa Police Department officers who engage with youth via sports activities to promote positive police-teen interactions is also provided under this program.
  - Some programmatic changes due to COVID-19 were implemented recently to maintain connections between the mentors and mentees during school closures. Some mentees communicate with their mentors via text message or phone call, while several male mentees connect via online video games.
  - Interactions between youth and their mentors have taken place over Zoom, where they can talk and play games together over video. This has allowed groups to meet, providing a forum for youth to interact with their peers.
  - Statistics were presented to show why mentoring is needed for the population they serve.
  - Outcome data was presented for the youth served in the program, which included increases in social competencies, trust in police, school attendance and grade point averages.
- **Challenges:**
  - The referral process has been slower than expected at some school sites.
  - There can be a misunderstanding that mentoring is primarily for tutoring, when it is really meant to build the student's self-esteem by facilitating a meaningful and positive relationship.
  - Connecting with students from charter schools is an ongoing process for parents who are interested in enrolling their child.
  - The pandemic has led to the cancellation of several police-teen engagement events.
  - The COVID-related closures have improved outreach efforts between staff and parents, and involvement with caregivers has significantly increased since the start of the pandemic.
- **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair, complemented Ms. Benkhe on the success and acknowledged the positive relationship between the program and the Maricopa Police Department.
- **Ms. Tracy Darmody**: Does the program serve Native American students? Ms. Benkhe stated she believes there are a number of tribal youth served but does not have a count prepared at this time. Mr. Anthony Gonzalez, program coordinator, concurred that a few Native American children were served during the year, but contact with the local tribe has occasionally been challenging. Since the start of remote learning, the program has had more success connecting with these youth and there is renewed optimism going into the following year.
- **Ms. TC Colla**: Believes this could be a great program to bring to the local juvenile detention school, and offered to connect program staff with the Pinal County juvenile detention administrators if interested in possibly expanding.
- **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair: What type of training do mentors receive? Ms. Benkhe replied that they use a model named Mentoring Project from Portland, OR. New mentors will shadow for several weeks and review agency policies and procedures. All staff meet weekly to discuss successes and challenges and make adjustments as needed. The program also uses the mandatory reporter training online video from Prevent Child Abuse Arizona. Ms. Benkhe added the program contracts with the school, which provides space and referrals. Once new employees are cleared for hire, they will go out to the schools to provide services onsite.

- **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair: How are mentors recruited? Mr. Gonzalez replied they try to find local mentors. College students work very well based on their schedules and expectation of pay. In general, they strive to recruit caring adults who believe in the mission and want to make a difference.

## Juvenile Justice System Updates

### Report from the Administrative Office of the Courts

- **Ms. Colla**, program and development budget manager with the Juvenile Justice Services Division at the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), provided an update of the county juvenile probation system, which included a summary of procedural changes impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.
  - Probation and detention continue to operate with precautions and health protocols in place, even though the number of COVID-19 infections has decreased.
  - AOC continues to provide health supplies (i.e., masks, gloves, cleaning supplies) to the juvenile courts across the state.
  - Weekly meetings between the AOC, the juvenile court directors and the Arizona Department of Health Services continue to share updates and information that impact the safety of the youth and staff.
  - Most recent concerns have been related to testing turnaround times. However, this was addressed, and currently the turnaround time is one to two days.
  - The AOC continues to work with the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections and the Department of Child Safety to make sure youth who move from one location to another are tested, both prior to and after they move from one agency to the next.
  - Court is conducted virtually when possible, which has led to improved attendance with the remote hearings. Many courts have expressed the intent to continue using virtual hearings due to the increased public engagement, notably in Maricopa County.
  - Maricopa County has closed the Southeast Juvenile Detention Facility due to the low numbers of detained youth, with no current date set to reopen. All youth are now held at the Durango facility. Current count at Durango is 130.
  - Cochise County will close their juvenile detention facility beginning January 1. Cochise County has not yet decided which county they will contract with to hold their juveniles.
  - Probation officers are back in the office, but many will continue to provide services remotely. AOC is rolling out probation training virtually to ensure services continue as usual.
  - Detention schools continue to run their education programs.
- **Ms. Wodraska**: How are educational services operating for detained youth? **Ms. Colla** replied each county implements their specific protocols for education. In all counties, education has continued, most often virtually to avoid in-person contact.
- **Ms. Maria Dodge**: Believes some youth are not having the same level of awareness with the seriousness that comes with appearing in-person in front of a judge, and is concerned about decisions to make virtual courts the standard practice. But for the most part, she concurs that most changes implemented are going well from her perspective. **Ms. Dodge** also noted that the population of detained youth in Maricopa County has significantly decreased from one year ago.
- **Ms. Colla** clarified that the Southeast Detention Facility has closed, but the Southeast Juvenile Court is still operating and holding juvenile hearings.
- **Ms. Shawn Cox**: Are there plans to at some point reopen the Southeast Facility? **Ms. Colla** stated that there are currently no plans to reopen the center.

- **Ms. Wodraska:** Any plans to repurpose the facility? **TC Colla** responded that there are no decisions at this time to repurpose, but the county has an innovative team that is likely looking into ways to make use of the center if it does not reopen as a detention facility. The facility recently closed, so there has been relatively little time yet to determine next steps.

### **Report from the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections**

- **Mr. Jeff Hood**, director at the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC), provided a department update.
  - Adobe Mountain School received an audit under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in August. **Mr. Hood** provided an overview of the PREA auditing process and the outcome of achieving compliance by the state adult and juvenile correction facilities.
  - Due to COVID-19, some modifications to the standard audit procedures were put in place to ensure safety, including the auditor conducting virtual interviews. The auditor conducted an onsite visit as part of the process; however, he was equipped with full personal protective gear during the inspection.
  - **Mr. Hood** concluded by announcing the agency has been found to be in full compliance with all 40 juvenile facility standards under PREA for the third consecutive audit.
  - **Ms. Nicole Schuren** commended **Mr. Hood** for his work in attaining compliance with PREA and helping to ensure our youth are safe.
  - **Mr. Hood** explained the audit process is very labor intensive, and the agency employs a full time PREA coordinator to ensure the necessary training and education are provided to the staff and youth. **Mr. Hood** acknowledged the coordinator's efforts to keep the agency in compliance. **Ms. Nannetti** asked **Mr. Hood** to let the coordinator know the commission appreciates her hard work.
- **Ms. Kate Howard**, government affairs and public relations administrator at ADJC, provided an update on agency operations related to Covid-19.
  - To date, 52 youth have tested positive for COVID-19 at Adobe Mountain School. All youth who tested positive were moved and held in medical isolation for a minimum of 10 days prior to moving them back into general population. No juveniles have tested positive in 30 days since last youth recovered.
  - To date, 46 staff members have tested positive for COVID, most of whom have since recovered and returned to work.
  - A testing blitz was conducted in July for all staff at Adobe Mountain, which revealed one new positive case. That individual was isolated and contact tracing took place to notify anyone that staff had contact with. The facility has rapid onsite testing available for staff and youth, and all tests are sent to the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) laboratory for confirmatory testing.
  - Contact tracing efforts have been effective in finding positive cases when symptoms are not present. This is made easier with monitoring cameras used throughout the facility, which can help identify the individuals who have had contact with the infected person.
  - All youth entering the facility, whether they are new youth or returning from a court hearing, are tested for COVID, though all positive cases from youth admitted to the facility so far have been new commitments and parole violators, rather than those coming back from court.
  - The department has recently resumed in-person visitation. Each youth can have up to two parents or guardians visit at one time. Visitation, however, is non-contact, and all visitors are required to wear a facemask and must socially distance themselves by six feet. In addition, a one-hour wait time between cohorts is implemented to minimize contact among visitors entering and leaving the school and to sanitize the visitation room between sessions.
  - Online remote visits have also been successful, and since switching to the virtual platform, the agency has seen an increase in contacts by family members compared to those that occurred prior to the pandemic.

- ADHS was consulted to ensure all the safety precautions necessary were put in place prior to initiating the in-person visitation.
- All youth and staff wear KN-95 masks, which seem to be effective in limiting the spread of the virus.
- Education programming continues for all detained youth. Students are placed in cohorts of eight, rotating their time between the other groups for in-class and distance learning sessions.
- **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair: Are both temperature checks and antibodies tests conducted at the school? Ms. Howard replied that temperatures are taken from everyone entering the facility, including staff and visitors, and they are asked the standard questions recommended by the Center for Disease Control. The department is working with the University of Arizona for testing staff who volunteer for the antibodies test. Some youth who have recovered from COVID have also been tested to determine how long they are protected from the virus through their immune system. The department can update the commission on outcomes when this data is available.
- **Ms. Wodraska** thanked Ms. Howard for providing the education update and commended the department for ensuring youth continue to receive some level of in-person instruction.

### ADJC Interstate Compact for Juveniles Report

- **Howard Wykes**, deputy parole administrator and Interstate Commission for Juveniles administrator at the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, provided the annual Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) report.
  - Rule changes were implemented since the most recent business meeting; however, these changes were mainly changes in verbiage to the existing rules and will not have an impact on the current ICJ operations.
  - During state fiscal year 2019, 142 youth from outside Arizona were supervised in the state under ICJ. 110 outgoing Arizona youth were served by other states. In FY 2020, 139 out-of-state youth were served under ICJ in Arizona, while only 99 youth were sent out to other states for supervision.
  - COVID-19 had a major impact on interstate placement between April and June. Very few juveniles were moved in or out of state during those months.
  - Juveniles who were returned home to Arizona increased in FY 2020 from the previous year 16 to 25. The department funded expenses associated with 9 of those returned in FY 2020.
  - Due to COVID, the national office put in place a rule, which was subsequently approved by the states, to suspend time requirements normally in place for all ICJ youth. Officials will do their best to ensure youth meet the established time limits, but regular enforcement of those violations has been temporarily waived due to the pandemic.
  - An ad-hoc committee was formed to address best practices for dealing with youth who are held on juvenile charges but also have adult charges pending in another state. The committee concluded its business and the body's recommendations were submitted.
  - The national office will be updating software for ICJ, integrating a digital platform for most recordkeeping practices, to help the system operate more efficiently. The upgrade will also allow for smartphone and tablet usability. The new system is scheduled to go live in December.
- **Ms. Darmody**: Do you have statistics related specifically to the number Native American supervised on ICJ? Mr. Wykes replied that the ICJ data presented includes Native American youth, but he is not aware of the specific total. He advised he will help **Ms. Darmody** connect with the appropriate official who would likely have this information.

### 2019-2020 Bi-Annual Report

- **Mr. Steve Selover**, program administrator at the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family, shared a rough draft of the Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission bi-annual report to explain how the report will be formatted and to request their input on content prior to sending it to the GOYFF communications division for approval.
- **Mr. Selover** provided a brief overview of each section of the report, which includes membership information,

commission goals, Title II funding activities, an update on Arizona's compliance monitoring progress and recommendations.

- **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair, suggested that members provide feedback regarding the recommendations through email, and prior to the next meeting, the commission will vote on the recommendations as a component of the completed report.
- **Ms. Gandara** volunteered to assist with the recommendations and explained the importance of including a statement related to racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system, as addressing this issue is a major function of the commission.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Grants Workgroup**

- **Dr. Robert Thomas** gave an update on Grant Workgroup current activities.
  - Review of Title II renewal applications for year 3 of the Title II grant is underway.
  - A survey for Title II subgrantee partners is being developed to increase collaboration with the organizations who not only provide services, but those that receive the services.

### **Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup**

- **Ms. Gandara** gave an update on activities conducted by the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup.
  - The workgroup is looking at data that informs whether COVID has had an impact on disparities, and what policies put in place as a response to the virus may be contributing to disparities.
  - The workgroup intends to develop a survey for law enforcement to examine new COVID-related policies that have been successful, and through this feedback create a list of lessons-learned from the field for future need.

## **Adjournment**

- **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair, reminded members the next meeting will take place December 3.
- Prior to adjournment, **Ms. Nannetti**, Chair, asked new commission member, **Tracy Darmody**, to introduce herself and share her background.
  - **Ms. Darmody** advised that she started her career at the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, and about 10 years ago started working with Native American communities in Arizona.
  - Through this work, she has served on several committees and established connections with tribal law enforcement, courts and attorneys working with juveniles.
  - **Ms. Darmody** stated she is happy to serve on the commission and sees herself as someone who can share information and serve as a bridge between the tribes and the state on these issues.
- **Ms. Nannetti** requested a motion to adjourn.
  - **Dr. Thomas** moved to adjourn the meeting.
  - **Ms. Vada Phelps** seconded the motion.
- Motion carried with no dissenting votes. Meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Dated September 4, 2020  
Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission  
Submitted by Steve Selover  
Program Administrator, GOYFF