

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SCHOOL-BASED DIVERSION:
Connecticut's 2018 Georgetown School-Justice Partnerships and Diversion Pathways Program
Capstone Project

by

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Project Mission

The Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Connecticut Capstone Team seeks to increase school-based diversion knowledge and buy-in, as well as the diffusion of effective school-based diversion models, by creating a Connecticut school-based diversion inventory and organizing restorative conversations with statewide stakeholders to increase knowledge and buy-in.

Summary and Background

Connecticut, much like the rest of the United States, continues to have high rates of school-based arrests. Approximately nine-thousand juvenile court referrals occur per year in our state, with eighteen-hundred of those being from schools (20%)ⁱ. Additionally, suspension/expulsion rates for children during the 2017-2018 school year was at 6.8%ⁱⁱ. That rate grows to 9.4% for Hispanic children and 14.3% for Black children.ⁱⁱⁱ School-based arrests are of serious concern, as they are particularly high among racial and ethnic minority children and children with disabilities, resulting in disproportionate rates of involvement for both groups. According to a Connecticut Voices for Children report using 2014-2015 school year data, Latino students were three-times as likely to be arrested in school as their white peers and Black students were four-times as likely.^{iv} Many of these arrests are the result of disruptive behaviors that could be more appropriately handled by schools working in conjunction with community-based behavioral health services. Unfortunately, many communities lack adequate community-based services.

During the 2017-18 school year, the State Department of Education (SDE) reported that Fighting and Battery (598), Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco (319), Physical and Verbal Confrontation (240), Personally Threatening Behavior (204) and School Policy Violations (151) were the most common incidents that resulted in a school-based arrest.^v Of the total 1,797 school-based arrests, Black and Hispanic students accounted for 996 total arrests.^{vi} Black and Hispanic students were more likely to receive exclusionary discipline for fighting and school policy violations compared to White students.^{vii} The sanctions for out-of-school suspensions decreased from 32,982 to 31,834 but expulsion increased from 750 to 797.^{viii} One out of twenty-five White students received a suspension, whereas one out of seven Black and one out of ten Hispanic students received the same consequence.^{ix}

Students who are arrested or expelled often have high rates of unmet mental health and academic needs. Connecticut's Mobile Crisis Intervention Services (MCIS) responds to schools when children and youth are in mental health crisis. In 2018, there were 14,585 episodes of care provided, with 7,743 unique children served.^x Schools were the top referrers to MCIS and accounted for 44% of the annual statewide total.^{xi} The top four issues for children referred by schools were Emotional (33%), Behavioral (26%), Social (23%), and Academic (17%).^{xii} Exposure to one or more traumas was reported by 62% of the children referred to MCIS statewide.^{xiii} Of the children served by MCIS, 15% had been suspended or expelled in the six month prior to the referral.^{xiv}

Rates of diagnosable mental health disorders are as high as 70% among justice-involved children.^{xv} Schools with discipline policies reminiscent of zero tolerance lack flexibility in responding to behavioral issues, for example connecting students to needed behavioral health services, and instead rely on exclusionary discipline (e.g., arrest, expulsion, suspension), often for minor and non-violent incidents.^{xvi} Involvement in the juvenile justice system can have wide-ranging impacts on development and long-term success, particularly for youth of color. Youth who are arrested and formally processed through the juvenile court system are four times as likely as their peers to not graduate from high school.^{xvii}

The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) has gained substantial ground around community and school reform since its inception in 2014. During the 2018 legislative session, the Diversion Workgroup of the JJPOC codified their recommendations for a state-level system for school diversion, “Development of a School-Based Diversion System in Connecticut.”^{xviii} These recommendations were developed collaboratively across agencies involved in the JJPOC, and outline next-steps for full-scale school diversion in Connecticut. Our Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Connecticut Capstone Team plans to imbed recommendation C.5. from the state’s diversion plan into our Capstone project.

Recommendation C.5. calls for enhancing engagement of a broader statewide stakeholder community to support the School-Based Diversion Initiative implementation (SBDI).^{xix} SBDI is a comprehensive approach for reducing school-based arrests. The SBDI model requires collaboration between school staff and community partners to reduce exclusionary discipline and increase access to behavioral health services and supports. Core components of SBDI include professional development, a graduated response model for school discipline, Memorandum of Agreement between schools and Connecticut’s Mobile Crisis Intervention Services, as well as between schools and police.

Since its inception in 2009, the SBDI model has collaborated with 43 schools (in high-arrest rate districts with students that are predominantly racial and ethnic minorities), reducing arrests by 34% and increasing referrals to behavioral health services by 47%. SBDI was developed through the MacArthur Foundation Models for Change Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network and is currently a component of former Governor Dannel Malloy’s Second Chance Society Initiative.^{xx} The Second Chance Society Initiative allows SBDI to further improve outcomes for youth by implementing additional innovative approaches including Restorative Practices and youth, family, community, and law enforcement engagement.

Key Partners

Our efforts to support the implementation of a School-Based Diversion System in the state of Connecticut will center on effectively engaging a broad stakeholder community in support of Juvenile Justice Reform in CT.

The following table identifies each of our target stakeholder groups with a corresponding plan to obtain their buy-in.

The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee	Leverage TYJI's involvement in and support of the JJPOC; members of the Capstone team are also members of the JJPOC and are actively involved in juvenile justice policy recommendation development.
Connecticut State Department of Education	Leverage multiple team members' roles and organizational ties to SDE.
Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS)	Utilize members of the TYJI staff and JJPOC members' collaborative relationships.
Connecticut Association for Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)	Leverage team member's role with sister organization.
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)	Leverage team member's role within organization to foster engagement.
The Office of Policy and Management (OPM)	Engage key members of leadership who are actively involved with juvenile justice reform work and who our team members have positive relationships with.
Connecticut Police Chiefs Association (CPCA)	Leverage team member's role within state as a trainer in youth police work, as well as a Police Sergeant in her town's Youth Division; engaging members of this organization who are also members of the JJPOC.
Connecticut State Police	Leverage team member's role within state as a trainer in youth police work, as well as a Police Sergeant in her town's Youth Division; engaging members of this organization who are also members of the JJPOC.
Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA)	TBD (organization in transition)
Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of School Resource Officers (CTSRO)	Leverage team member's role within state as a trainer in youth police work, as well as a Police Sergeant in her town's Youth Division; engaging members of this organization who are also members of the JJPOC.
Connecticut Youth Services Association (CYSA)	Leverage JJPOC relationship; leverage team member's relationship to CYSA President.
Juvenile Law/Juvenile Handling POST Certified Instructors	Leverage team member's role within state as a trainer in youth police work, as well as a Police Sergeant in her town's Youth Division; leverage University of New Haven's content expertise in Criminal Justice content.
The Alliance for Children's Mental Health	Leverage team member's role as a member of this organization's Steering Committee.

The Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative	Leverage multiple team members' involvement within this collaborative.
The Yale Behavioral Health Advocacy Group	Leverage team member's role within her organization to recruit colleagues to engage this group.
The Connecticut Education Association (CEA)	Leverage team member's previous role in the public education system to engage members.
The American Federation of Teachers (AFT)	Leverage team member's previous role in the public education system to engage members.
FAVOR, Inc.	We will work to <i>meaningfully</i> engage this organization through invitation from team members with established relationships.
African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP)	We will work to <i>meaningfully</i> engage this organization through invitation from team members with established relationships.
Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (CTJJA)	Leverage team member's role as a member of this organization's Steering Committee.
Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA)	Leverage team member's relationship with leadership and the organization's relationship with TYJI.
Connecticut Voices for Children (CT Voices)	Engage through staff participating on the CJJR Capstone team.

Action Plan

We proposed the following work plan and timeline for the completion of our Capstone Project. This plan includes action steps and key deliverables we have designed to accomplish our project mission.

Our action plan also includes a thorough analysis of how we plan to measure success: what data we will collect in order to gauge our success, our measures for determining fidelity of implementation and who is responsible to the collection of and analysis of each piece of this data. For more information on our measurements, please see attachment Appendix A, "Logic Model".

Action Plan

CJJR “School-Justice Partnerships and Diversion Pathways” Capstone Project

April 2019

Date: April 8, 2019

CJJR Team Members

Names	Role	Phone	Email
Devon McCormick	Lead	203-932-7359	dmccormick@newhaven.edu
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Adapted from the *Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project Action Planning Booklet for School-Wide Positive Behavior Support*

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SCHOOL-BASED DIVERSION

Our team meetings are regularly scheduled on a monthly basis.

Date & time: To be determined via a monthly doodle poll

Location: The Tow Youth Justice Institute

Length of Meeting: 1 hour

Establish a Team Goal or Purpose: *The Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Connecticut Capstone Team seeks to increase school-based diversion knowledge and buy-in, as well as the diffusion of effective school-based diversion models, by creating a Connecticut school-based diversion inventory and organizing restorative conversations with statewide stakeholders to increase knowledge and buy-in.*

Develop an action plan that includes development, implementation, and management activities.

Goal	What is it?	Who is responsible?	When will it be started?	When will it be completed?	How will we evaluate it?
Goal 1	Compile an inventory of CT school-based diversion initiatives/programs.	Full team	April 2019	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 25% of CT Middle & High Schools inventoried • Summary document
Goal 2	Create a Restorative conversation structure and script.	Team Lead, Full team	January 2020	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation structure and script document
Goal 3	Conduct stakeholder conversations.	Full team	April 2020	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 50% of targeted of stakeholder groups participate • Pre & post questionnaire
Goal 4	Compile and analyze stakeholder feedback.	Full team	July 2020	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary document
Goal 5	Create report and present to the JJPOC.	Full team	October 2020	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report for JJPOC & stakeholders • Presentation to JJPOC • At least 2 recommendations to JJPOC • At least 2 next steps for JJPOC to take • # of key stakeholders attending presentations

Goal 1: Compile an inventory of CT school-based diversion initiatives/programs.

Goal	Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Completed?
Compile an inventory of CT school-based diversion initiatives/programs.	Contact SDE for list of CT districts Middle & High Schools	TYJI Staff (Devon McCormick & Erika Nowakowski); JPPOC SDE member(s)	April 2019- June 2019	
	Compile name of Principal and e-mail address for each	TYJI Student	June 2019- August 2019	
	Create brief online survey related to existence of and components of school-based diversion at site	TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Devon McCormick, student)	April 2019- August 2019	
	Conduct brief online school-based diversion survey	CJJR Team; TYJI Staff; CT School Principals (Middle & High)	September 2019- November 2019	
	Create summary document	CJJR Team	December 2019-March 2020	

Goal 2: Create a Restorative conversation content and methodology.

Goal	Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Completed?
Create Restorative conversation content and methodology.	Develop conversation content under the following overall categories: 1) baseline knowledge of school-based diversion, 2) providing information on SBDI & our school-based diversion inventory, 3) future diffusion efforts	TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Devon McCormick, Student), CJJR Team	September 2019-January 2020	
	Develop the methodology for a Restorative conversation on the school-based diversion content	Team Lead, TYJI Student, CJJR Team	September 2019-January 2020	
	Test content and methodology	CJJR Team, TYJI Student, TBD (test participants)	February 2020	
	Finalize content and method	CJJR Team, TYJI Student, Dr. Danielle Cooper	March 2020	

Goal 3: Conduct stakeholder meetings.

Goal	Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Completed?
Conduct stakeholder meetings.	Develop pre and posttest for stakeholders on school-based diversion	TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Devon McCormick, Student), CJJR Team	April 2019-August 2019	
	Develop methodology for capturing notes during stakeholder conversations	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper), TYJI Student	April 2019-August 2019	
	Contact stakeholder groups and schedule conversations	CJJR Team, TYJI Student	November 2019-March 2019	
	Facilitate pre and posttest, Restorative conversations, with stakeholders	CJJR Team	April 2020-June 2020	

Step 4: Compile and analyze stakeholder feedback.

Goal	Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Completed?
Compile and analyze stakeholder feedback.	Identify a methodology for summarizing notes/pre and posttest from conversations	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Students)	July 2020	
	Create summary of notes/pre and posttest taken from stakeholder conversations	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Students)	August 2020	
	Analyze summary for common themes, important learnings and meaningful feedback for the JJPOC	TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Students), CJJR Team	September 2020-November 2020	

Step 5: Create report and present to the JJPOC.

Goal	Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Completed?
Create report and present to the JJPOC.	Identify at least two recommendations and at least two next steps to report to the JJPOC from conversation/pre and posttest summary	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Erika Nowakowski, Student)	November 2020-January 2021	
	Using the conversation/pre and posttest summary, recommendations and next steps, create a report for the JJPOC	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Students)	January 2021-March 2021	
	Create a presentation for the JJPOC on learnings and recommendations from CJJR Capstone	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper, Erika Nowakowski, Student)	January 2021-March 2021	
	Invite stakeholder participants to attend JJPOC presentation	CJJR Team	January 2021-March 2021	
	Present to JJPOC the findings of the CJJR Capstone Project	CJJR Team, TYJI Staff (Dr. Danielle Cooper)	April 2021	

Alignment with Other Efforts

Connecticut has a statutorily created Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) whose mandates are fourfold:

- Reduce child incarceration,
- Reduce the over-representation of Black and Brown children in the juvenile justice system,
- Ensure that children who touch the justice system have opportunities to learn and thrive, and
- Provide the services and supports children and families need to reduce juvenile recidivism.

As part of the mandate to reduce juvenile incarceration, Connecticut passed PA 16-147.^{xxi} Section 11 of this public act required the state to develop “a plan for school-based diversion initiatives to reduce juvenile justice involvement among children with mental health needs in schools with high rates of school-based arrests, disproportionate minority contact and a high number of juvenile justice referrals.” The resulting plan was codified in Section 2 of PA 18-31.^{xxii}

Our capstone project aims to complete once piece of this plan--specifically, the piece that brings together stakeholders who care about, influence, and interact with school based diversion efforts. To facilitate this goal, we created a capstone team comprised of experts who work across various aspects of the juvenile justice system. Our team includes two individuals who train schools in practices and models that reduce justice involvement, a police Sergeant who specializes in youth, a juvenile program architect from the state’s Judicial branch, a legislative advocate for juvenile justice reform, an academic expert who researches juvenile justice reform, and the Deputy Director and General Counsel for our Boards of Education. Together, our team shares the expertise and network to reach, connect to, and negotiate with a diverse group of stakeholders across Connecticut. We have the ability to engage school leaders, school administrators and teachers, lawmakers, and law enforcement. We will need to work mindfully to engage youth and families in this stakeholder group.

The JJPOC’s plan to spread school-based diversion initiatives across the state is comprised of three sets of recommendations. The first set of recommendations involves pursuing opportunities for integration of the behavioral health and juvenile justice systems:

Recommendation A1 requires JJPOC members to collaborate to support the expansion of community-based services. Major hurdles to achieving this goal include a budget that is strained by decades of neglected pension and debt service payments compounded by the state failing to reinvest much of the money saved from closing the Connecticut Juvenile Training School in 2018. The JJPOC plans to partner with the Council of State Governments to determine where Connecticut may be able to continue to achieve efficiencies and reduce the size of the justice population. They have also contracted Dr. Lauren Ruth from Connecticut Voices for Children to conduct an analysis determining the fiscal impact of reducing the population of children involved

in the juvenile justice system since 2008. Dr. Ruth is a member of the Connecticut Capstone Team, and she approaches her work on the team with an eye toward educating legislators about the return on investment of expanding community-based services and empowering stakeholders with tools to engage in fiscal advocacy. Part of our engagement efforts may involve helping stakeholders understand the costs of implementing best-practice programs and where/how to advocate to fund these programs.

Recommendation A2 is to ensure alignment among existing school-based initiatives and in the community, particularly through Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards. Our team member Tianna Hill is a project coordinator for Connecticut's School Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) through the Connecticut Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI). CHDI is an active participant on Diversion workgroup of the JJPOC that works with the Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards to create consistent measures of need and diversionary practices across the state. Through our efforts to bring together stakeholders (including the Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards), Tianna can help ensure that we discuss best practices in school-based initiatives, the importance of quality assurance and implementing the model with fidelity, and how to seek further information and technical assistance.

The second set of recommendations involves supporting school diversion efforts in Connecticut schools to increase capacity for early identification and intervention, reduction of exclusionary discipline practices, and improvements in behavioral health services and supports.

Recommendation B1 involves supporting school districts in implementing models that reduce various aspects of the school-to-prison pipeline. Currently our State Department of Education is working with the JJPOC Diversion Workgroup to implement this goal, but our Capstone team can help to facilitate connections between the stakeholder group and ongoing JJPOC efforts. In addition to Tianna's expertise in implementing the School-Based Diversion Initiative, our teammate Devon McCormick works to teach schools how to use Restorative Practices to improve school climate and reduce exclusionary discipline. Our teammate Sergeant Jill Ruggiero spent years training School Resource Officers across the state about ways to contribute to diversionary efforts and ensure that schools are safe places where all students can learn, and continues to serve her own community in this capacity. Our teammate Patrice McCarthy—the Deputy Director for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education—deeply understands the varying problems different districts face. These three women engage in daily work to help schools implement models that reduce aspects of the school-to-prison pipeline, and they are experts in using a variety of tools to achieve this goal. Ultimately, tools only work when they fit a school's particular problems, and the experts on our team can help schools identify which tools may work for their particular context and problem.

Recommendation B2 involves encouraging schools to complete a comprehensive assessment of their district's mental health services and supports, including resources and gaps. While a comprehensive assessment of all mental and behavioral health services across Connecticut's schools is beyond the scope of our capstone project, Dr. Danielle Cooper and Devon McCormick plan to contribute to this effort by identifying and mapping the diversion programs, strategies,

and interventions that exist within Connecticut's schools and communities. Given the intimate connection between young people's behavioral health and juvenile justice involvement, school-based and community-based diversion efforts must work together with community-based behavioral health systems, so this inventory augments the work of the JJPOC Diversion workgroup.

The third set of recommendations has an overarching goal of implementing SBDI in Connecticut's schools with the highest rates of arrest and supporting enhancements that will ensure district-wide and statewide reach. The first four goals within this set of recommendations involve sustaining SBDI in the schools where it has started, piloting an adapted SBDI for elementary schools, incorporating additional tiers of SBDI to reach smaller school districts, and conducting a cost analysis of return on investment. All of these efforts aim to find ways make SBDI work for more schools across the state, but they require significant funding. To implement all four goals, Connecticut would need to appropriate an additional \$1,045,000 over the next three years (above the \$1,000,000/year already appropriated for SBDI). Connecticut just instituted a *very* tight spending cap that requires a 3/5 majority vote in both the House of Representatives to exceed, so obtaining the additional funding will take large, coordinated advocacy efforts by a wide set of stakeholders.

Through our capstone project team engaging a broad statewide stakeholder community, our team can help ensure that schools who need access to tools to reduce exclusionary discipline and serve the behavioral health needs of their students know about the school-based diversion plan, SBDI, and Restorative Practices. We can help schools understand what resources they need to be able to access these tools and implement the tools correctly. Further, this group may be able to work together to advocate for the funding needed to be able to implement different tiers of SBDI intervention in *all* schools in the state that need support improving attendance, addressing behavioral health needs, and reducing exclusionary discipline.

Barriers to Implementation

While we are confident in our ability to foster change and meet our Capstone project goals and objectives, we recognize that we will likely face a variety of barriers. One of the more easily recognizable barriers is the amount of time this project will require from us and those we plan to collaborate with. Overall, we seek to diffuse school-based diversion practices across Connecticut so that students, families, schools, and community partners have the tools they need to accomplish effective juvenile justice diversion. Part of our plan to accomplish this lofty end goal is to enhance the engagement of a broad, statewide stakeholder community, in support of our efforts and those of juvenile justice reform in general. We have identified several stakeholders to engage. Due to our diverse Capstone team, many important relationships are already in place. Although these professionals are integral to moving forward school-based diversion, we suspect these important partners have limited or a very specific understanding of school-based diversion. To enhance the engagement of these groups will most certainly require some of their staff to undergo training in the area of school-based diversion programs and more

broadly, juvenile justice reform philosophies. The problem will likely then be limited time to do so.

For example, we often hear Board of Education employees, school administrators, and teachers voice concerns that “there is not enough time in the day” to effectively teach the students. K-12 curricula are dense, and many educators report struggling to find the time to spend extra minutes on ancillary topics outside their rigorous curriculum. To foster actual change in the outcomes for students will most certainly require some school administrators, teachers, and staff to make time to learn more about school-based diversion practices, and then actually put these practices into place. We will need time to train on diversionary strategies like that of Restorative Practices and the negative outcomes that students can suffer when not practiced.

So what will our team do to overcome this potential barrier? We propose that by providing concise, meaningful educational opportunities we can incentivize overloaded individuals to participate while concurrently providing them with necessary knowledge to inform their advocacy and practices in the process. In addition, we will use this opportunity to make sure stakeholders are fully informed about our Capstone process: why we are engaging them, what we are trying to accomplish, and perhaps most importantly, why it is so critical to increase school-based diversion for the students of Connecticut. It is our hope by engaging these stakeholders and providing them with meaningful school-based diversion information, we will gain buy-in to these practices that will result in the disruption of the school to prison pipeline.

Another strategic intervention to address the time constraint barrier is to provide cross-agency training. We believe this approach will save time, in that many of the disruptions and dynamic issues at play in an organization can be interrupted when work is done with external accountability partners. Additionally, this approach will encourage multiple child-serving agencies to come together, thereby enabling all stakeholders to hear others’ points of view and to collaborate on implementation planning.

Within the discussion of providing easily accessed and concise school-based diversion training, there may be an additional barrier in terms of engaging law enforcement. As we know, law enforcement officers are the gatekeepers for youth into, or more importantly away from, our juvenile justice system. Restorative Practices and other diversionary tactics are not taught at the police academy, nor are they taught as a matter of practice in standard officer recertification courses. In general, juvenile justice reform philosophies have been slow to reach law enforcement officers. As gatekeepers and those most likely to determine a youth’s justice pathway, it is critical that this information make its way to our frontlines.

It will be difficult to get buy-in from the CT Police Officer Standards and Training Council, the group that regulates what information is included in Connecticut officer training. The police officers themselves may also present a significant challenge. As law enforcement officers, it is inherent in their roles to enforce the law. What is less recognized in this role is the importance of providing resources to the public, especially youth. Changing the mentality of some officers to, first and foremost, focus on keeping youth out of the system rather than “enforcing the law” through arresting offenders and subsequently entering them into the system will be an uphill

battle. A pervasive belief that youth “need to learn a lesson” and should be punished still exists in certain circles. This misunderstanding for some in the law enforcement community is grounded in the belief that our justice system is designed to “punish” kids rather than hold young people accountable for their behavior, identify root causes to provide opportunities for rehabilitation and to prevent further harm to the community. Perpetuating this belief inhibits our project’s success. Our team is capable of creating educational opportunities to correct this misinformation, but will certainly face the challenge of getting our foot in the door with populations who are committed to justice as a punishment system.

To address these issues, our team will target a more in-depth, thoughtful approach to engagement of the CT Police Officer Standards and Training Council. We plan to begin our conversations with a Restorative lens and an empathetic ear, and make room for push-back, disagreement and distrust. It is our hope that through engaging with CTPOST in a thoughtful way and massaging our relationship over time, they will begin to trust us and our expertise, and will become a messenger for school-based diversion along with us.

Additionally, CT is experiencing a widespread public narrative insinuating escalating, serious, juvenile crime statewide. There is ample research-based evidence refuting this, in fact the data speaks, instead, to juvenile crime having overall decreased in the state. The problem lies with the many law enforcement officers who are *feeling* a significant rise in more serious crime (for example, stolen car/burglary incidents have plagued most CT towns over the last several months), especially in communities where it had not previously occurred. This narrative, true or false, is raising the question: what should be done with these juveniles? We must be prepared to answer this question. Through our collective efforts with the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee and the many discussions that are taking place concerning this issue, we will share actual data with stakeholders so that any misconceptions are addressed.

Another likely barrier is the conflicting priorities of the stakeholders we will be targeting. Convincing child-serving agencies that partnerships and inter-agency communication should be a priority, rather than an ideal, will be difficult. Organizing and coordinating work between systems nets real change, but also requires more work, patience and effort than many of us feel we can offer. Our team is removing much of the organizing and coordination weight from our partners through our project, and we believe this will lessen the strain on our partners and increase their willingness to participate.

As our team has discussed this project and settled on our plan, it has become painfully clear to us that even we are not immune to the “silo effect” that plagues social service work. We have seen examples of agencies taking on work that is already being done by other agencies, without realizing. We have learned that time and effort has been devoted to tackling issues that have already been addressed within other systems. Our team has even struggled to effectively collaborate with the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee during this planning stage. We suspect this is partly because of the challenges of cross-agency coordination mentioned above, but also the enormous challenge of trying to identify exactly who the unknown stakeholders are and what they are doing. We will address this challenge by first bringing on a

University of New Haven student to provide us with support in searching out and identifying potential stakeholders, and will intentionally ask our currently identified stakeholders for additional recommendations.

Maybe the biggest looming barrier for us in sustaining our efforts for the next two years, as well as how we will expand the implementation of school-based diversion efforts across the state, will be related to funding. Determining what funding is necessary and securing that funding will be a part of our conversation throughout this process. It is our hope that our effort to build advocacy through this project will ultimately lead to additional funding. In the meantime, nesting our project at the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) at the University of New Haven has allowed our team access to funded participation from our project lead, Devon McCormick, the TYJI's Research Director, Dr. Danielle Cooper, and the University's student population. This level of financial commitment to staffing will provide us the minimum level of expertise and administrative support to sustain two-years of project implementation.

ⁱ JJPOC Development of a School-Based Diversion System in Connecticut Submitted to the JJPOC by the Diversion Workgroup, January 18, 2018, p. 5-7.

ⁱⁱ Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools. Connecticut State Department of Education, February 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ricks, A. (November 2016), "Persistent Racial Inequality in School Arrest Rates in Connecticut" Connecticut Voices for Children (November 2016) <http://www.ctvoices.org/sites/default/files/juv16racialinequity.pdf>

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools. Connecticut State Department of Education, February 2019.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Mobile Crisis Intervention Services Performance Improvement Center (PIC), Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2018 July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018.

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} Ibid.

^{xiii} Ibid.

^{xiv} Ibid.

^{xv} JJPOC Development of a School-Based Diversion System in Connecticut Submitted to the JJPOC by the Diversion Workgroup, January 18, 2018, p. 5.

^{xvi} Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, "Facts and Figures on Connecticut Juvenile Justice System"

^{xvii} Sweeten, G. (2006). "Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement." *Justice Quarterly*, 23 (4), 462-480.

^{xviii} State of Connecticut General Assembly Public Act 18-31 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/ACT/pa/pdf/2018PA-00031-R00HB-05041-PA.pdf>

^{xix} JJPOC Development of a School-Based Diversion System in Connecticut Submitted to the JJPOC by the Diversion Workgroup, January 18, 2018, p. 16

^{xx} Bracey, J., Casiano, Y., Hill, T., Vanderploeg, J. (January 2017), "Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative" https://www.ctsbdi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SBDI_ONEpager_Jan2017final.pdf

^{xxi} State of Connecticut Public Act No. 16-147, *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee*, Approved June, 2016, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2016/ACT/pa/pdf/2016PA-00147-R00HB-05642-PA.pdf>

^{xxii} State of Connecticut Public Act No. 18-31, *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee and Concerning the Transfer of Juvenile Services from the Department of Children and Families to the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch*, Approved June, 2018, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/ACT/pa/pdf/2018PA-00031-R00HB-05041-PA.pdf>