

**Raising the Lower Age Limit Subgroup  
Diversion Work Group  
December 3<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
10AM-11:30AM  
Zoom Conference Call**

**Agenda:**

**1. Introductions**

- a. **Joshua Berhegger:** Watertown Police Department
- b. **Richard Concepcion:** Graduate Assistant at the Tow Youth Justice Institute
- c. **Susan Hamilton:** Public Defenders Office
- d. **Francis Carino:** States Attorney Office
- e. **Erica Bromley:** Connecticut Youth Services Association
- f. **Abby Anderson:** CT Juvenile Justice Alliance
- g. **Sarah Eagan:** Office of Child Advocate
- h. **Yeecenia Casiano:** The Child Health Development Institute
- i. **Kelly Orts:** JJPOC Project Manager, Tow Youth Justice Institute
- j. **Erika Nowakowski:** Associate Director of the Tow Youth Justice Institute
- k. **Amanda Cartwright:** Connecticut Youth Services Association
- l. **Samantha Moul:** Tow Youth Justice Institute
- m. **Lauren Moscato:** Center for Children's Advocacy
- n. **Andrea Spencer:** University of Saint Joseph
- o. **Lauren Ruth:** Connecticut Voices for Children
- p. **Marisa Halm:** Center for Children's Advocacy
- q. **Mark J. Palmieri:** Center for Children with Special Needs
- r. **Jeana Bracey:** The Child Health Development Institute
- s. **Ryan Matthews:** Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters
- t. **Tenille Bonilla:** CT Juvenile Justice Alliance

**1. Review Graduated Response Model Document**

- Discussion about how to help schools with a roadmap to figure out what kinds of alternatives can be done with certain behaviors to limit police involvement if this can be used as an appropriate recommendation to identify behaviors and who will be involved in handling these youth.
- Highlighted in the document is what is being taken away. The behaviors are only focused on the charges rather than past history or previous services that were provided. Starting from the framework assuming that police would not be involved and what interventions are in place for this age while schools are the target population. This can be used when the police officers get called because of the certain guidelines presented.
- Adding that the education team should meet to debrief after the incident is appropriate at which level of crisis. Some language came out of the Classroom Safety Taskforce 2

years ago that might be useful to appropriately responding to what is being discussed around an educational team.

- Any matrix is consistent with the youth's lens having unmet needs rather than being delinquent. Youth behaviors need to be assessed through their targeted needs rather than a warning and redirect that behavior in schools while moving to a therapeutic lens.
- When we look at the things DCF/CHDI, etc. are, how can they be discussed, highlighted as to where they are and how they could be expanded - and this addresses several initiatives the JJPOC is looking at - this group raising the minimum age, the other group looking to remove police from schools, another looking to decriminalize "breach of peace" We need more than behavioral health options, but this is one thing to build out that creates solutions for several different groups.
- DCF and CHDI, and SDE have many different interventions they have in schools, SHAPE, and PROJECT AWARE along with SBDI and SBHCs, etc.
- The challenge of working from this document is that we are working backward to "undo". Start from the beginning of what response to be early on may turn out to be easier. It might be easier to construct for the earliest for them to intervene successfully.
- What can this group do to work with CABE, CASP, SDE, etc., to push/support schools to fulfill their obligations to children and families?
- Engagement is important by putting strategies in place, including behavioral problems or academic problems, and reestablishing engagement. How can we maintain and improve that instruction? Need to direct a matrix to mental health and curricular/support perspective.
- Inviting the members of this subgroup in the social, emotional, and learning lens should help work on this document since we have a deadline and the next two weeks to create an updated model.
- When describing behaviors that lead to arrest, they are referred to as offense levels, and we need to more consistent with the language. When working with police and schools, it is called "tier." Level 1 and Level 2, we should commit offenses of vaping or tobacco offenses. Level 3, there is a distinction between theft and how serious/ value of that crime. Persons involved in Level 3 and 4 are the same, so should we keep that consistent? Recommend in the implementation plan that schools develop a response protocol. It provides a matrix template or flow chart that schools could choose to adopt, tailor, or not use at all as a helpful tool rather than a strict mandate.
- This document can serve as a framework and useful language; p. 13 has a graphic <https://www.chdi.org/index.php/publications/reports/impact-reports/health-students-and-thriving-schools><sup>SEP</sup>
- What is the existing infrastructure that the schools that usually call law enforcement use?
- The willingness and competency of school districts across our state vary widely in recognizing mental health issues and learning disabilities in children and finding them eligible for appropriate resources. It is easier to label as a behavior issue and call the police, so holding school districts accountable needs to be a big part of this framework.
- Begin to use the same legislative language from other subgroups as it is important to work together as part of this document's package. Use the language that for these children, it is a civil rights issue.

## 2. Update on Implementation Plan

## 3. Other

- Leftover sections

## 4. Next Steps

- Legislative Language:

Legislation for raising the minimum age of juvenile court from seven years to twelve years on July 1, 2021. The plan has to be vetted through this group via email and taken to the diversionary workgroup. Drafted language of the matrix while not putting in the statute. It can be stated about the process of the matrix protocol created with these partners and utilizing these frameworks and be specific about the new referral process. A line or two about how schools should create this matrix should be sufficient enough before implementation. We need a paragraph about what this matrix should include and explain what we discussed today from our education and mental health experts! Using the existing behavioral health interventions but using them more often with the school system.

-Should talk about what will be available externally/community-based and what will be available on the school side with an overlay of transparency and accountability with a specific focus on racial equity. SDE has a critical role to play and should be reporting to JJPOC/others regarding its oversight and corrective action roles. SDE is the education public policy body for the state but, most importantly, is the IDEA compliance agency with the appropriate partners.

-Document sent of the Matrix, Referral Form, Legislative Language, and suggestions about the accountability piece by calling 911 with data collection.

-On Friday, December 11th, the Diversion meeting is with many opportunities to still work on this implementation.

- Formalize Implementation Plan
- Diversion Workgroup Meeting 12/11

**Next Meeting-** December 17<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30am

CHECKLIST
<input type="checkbox"/> RED Lens
<input type="checkbox"/> Integrating Community Voice
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Plan