

**THIS MEETING CONTAINED A PRESENTATION**

**Education Workgroup**

**May 23, 2033**

**2:00pm-3:00pm**

**Web-Based Meeting-Zoom**

**Meeting Summary:**

- Update from Dr. Worthy
  - Upon arrival at the job Dr. Worthy talked to many individuals and organizations that are involved in the Connecticut juvenile justice system (CCA, The Child Advocate, MYI Staff, CSSD, Bridgeport Detention, Journey House, DCF, Committee Documents) to gain as much knowledge as he could
  - This implementation team will make sure that his team is in place by October, they have just finished posting for an administrative assistant position and will work on posting for other positions in the coming months
  - It was noted that Connecticut's institutional structures are complex, and his role is to make sure that structures are efficient to serve youth
  - The plan is to create accountability measures, increase high schools' options, improve transitions plans, increase teacher and administration capacity, increase instructional time, implement SEL, have designated time for vocational training and increase restorative justice practices
  - Accountability
    - The idea of creating a universal screener was presented, this would track student academic performance and give data on where and how students are progressing
  - High school options: possibly implementing a new program at MYI
    - In New Haven students have seen success with the Gateway to College program, if this is implemented into MYI students there could also see success, with the potential to help their transition back to their home district
  - Transitional Plans
    - Hiring pupil specialists to work with students in facilities, this will be a wraparound service provided to students with follow ups to ensure that students are integrated back into home district successfully
    - Specialists will manage and track educational credits of youth while in our of home placement and be responsible for communicating with reentry coordinators.
  - Increase teachers and administrators' instructional capacity
    - Providing targeted professional development
    - Creating a network of meetings, to get multiple facilities together to speak about the problems they face and come up with ways to increase instructional capacity
  - Increase instructional time
    - At Manson currently there are 5 hours of instruction, and 1.5 hours of vocational training, there is a vision of increase hours of instruction by adding a half hour of social emotional learning to instructional time
  - Designated time for vocational training

- This would mean working on the issue of space in facilities as this currently is a barrier to vocational training programs
    - Working on providing funding to increase capacity of vocational training
  - Implement restorative practices
    - Many of the kids that enter the system enter with histories of trauma, it is important to provide them with SEL education to help improve their self-regulation
    - In Hartford DMHAS has trained not only teachers but also correctional staff in restorative practices, they have seen less incidence in classrooms and the facility
  - A question about what is being done on a statewide basis to ensure that credits are correctly and consistently transferred was asked, right now they are trying to create a data sharing system to ensure credits are transferred
  - The transition specialists will have small caseloads to make sure that nothing is lost, and all kids get the services they need
  - It was asked what the structure of Dr. Worthy's team will look like, he will have two department heads, each department head will have 10 transition specialists, there will be an IT position responsible for supporting the creation of the data sharing program, and a research analyst responsible for reports and support of the system
  - The difference between re-entry coordinators and transition specialists was clarified, transition specialist is a new position they are individual specialists making sure all students are served, like an intensive caseworker
  - Transition specialists and others who handle credit transfers or other school related things are coming from the education field, many will have similar training to school counselors
  - Graduation pathways have been difficult because many would like students to graduate from their home districts, transition specialists can help with this as they are the ones keeping track of requirements and ensuring credits transfer
  - The point was brought up that home districts don't always feel that they have the obligation to the student, it is important for districts to hear that they have an ongoing obligation to every student regardless of involvement in the system
  - The idea for joint training for re-entry specialists and transitions specialists was proposed
  - Currently each facility has its own assessment system, the Universal Screener would be given to all students to assess their reading and math skills to determine grade level, it would be done three times a year and help to track progress, this would help to pinpoint issues that are preventing students from progressing
  - It was noted that everyone in the state is going through new IEP training to fill current gaps and that there is accountability and responsibility to serve all students
  - Something that needs to be more thought through is how to serve the short-term population as it will be a difficult task
- Discussion with Laura Furr on Youth and Community Engagement
    - Tasked with assessing past and current community engagement then recommending next steps for the JJPOC and its workgroups
    - Authentic engagement:

- Meaningful in supporting and listening
  - Repeated over the long-term
  - Youth and families know they are heard
  - Youth adult partnership: sharing power
  - Youth input: focus group or survey
  - Youth decisions lead by adults: adults giving resources to support youth ideas
- What authentic engagement is not:
  - Not checking the box
  - Not skewing the results by inviting those that agree with use
  - Listening to a story and not applying lived expertise
- Where is this workgroup currently in terms of engaging youth and families?
  - CCA has worked with TYJI to incorporate youth, however, meeting times are a barrier with makes it difficult for youth to participate
  - There has not been sustained engagement with youth and communities
  - Engagement was easier when meeting in person since CCA worked to bring youth to the table to give input on education
  - It was noted that this groups feels that youth engagement is essential to open eyes to new ideas
- For this group what is the ideal of youth, family, and community engagement look like at the end of next year
  - The group would like to use their recourses such as CSSD, USD #1 and #2, and CCA to bring youth to meetings
  - The idea of having multiple young people at the meeting was embraced, including groups that have been hard to reach like youth in the system and youth who have just been released
  - It is important to have an adult that is a support to the youth in the meeting that the youth trusts, someone there to help prepare them to participate
  - The importance of meeting youth where they are at, going to them to show that this group is willing to go the extra mile, was brought up
- This group has not tried to go to an educational setting for meetings, some individuals in this workgroup have engaged with youth in educational settings
- There is an online survey that Laura would like everyone to participate in: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeTrels09k04Ag8qwDB1ba-j6Zp8J-tuQRvEiWPO-kFVqk\\_Ng/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeTrels09k04Ag8qwDB1ba-j6Zp8J-tuQRvEiWPO-kFVqk_Ng/viewform)
- Discussion with Bellwether
  - Bellwether will be working April through June with the JJPOC
  - They are a non-profit organization that functions like a think tank as well as a consulting firm
  - Bellwether does not provide direct services; they are team that works with groups like the JJPOC to provide guidance and support
  - Direct experience working with school discipline policy and supporting multiagency workgroups around the country
  - They also provide research and writing to help schools reduce their reliance on punitive approaches to subsequently support youth in healthy transitions to adulthood

- Bellwether brings extensive and expansive knowledge about how to tactically make shifts away from punitive punishments
- Research has been done on youth who have experienced disruption in school and how to best serve them so they can be successful in school
- Overview
  - Gathering information for this group and other groups to understand process and discussion so far, where is there energy and agreement around school discipline
  - They would like to know what the key sticking points are that they can provide resources for
  - Interested in each group members area of expertise that they can make use of
  - It was asked what information, research, or resources that Bellwether can bring to the JJPOC
  - Think about the path forward and top priorities, what will be different if this group is successful
  - Understanding the biggest risks and how to mitigate them
- Four primary channels
  - Written input
  - Small group discussions
  - One-on-one interviews
  - Review of meeting summaries and other written materials
- The JJPOC was not successful with suspension and expulsion recommendations this legislative session which is why recommendations will be revisited to determine strategy
- Three questions Bellwether would like answered
  - How would you describe the problem that the group should be addressing?
  - What do you think is holding this problem in place?
  - In the next 3-5 years, what outcomes will be achieved through the elimination of exclusionary practices in CT schools?
- Asking about big picture, what is the outcome that is going to be seen or is wanted to be seen in the long-term
- Recognized that change is incremental, being able to describe what you want is the best way to move towards the ideal future
- Google form that Bellwether would like everyone to participate in: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfupNGlZIEzpbVouJv9UACmA24EUT33hocBOTMDxOfPlrgg/viewform>
- Update from Rep. Porter
  - The piece of legislation that went through, it initially got out of committee but did not include the recommendation from this workgroup, however the bill died, then was resurrected into new legislation that was a part of many bipartisan compromises, this bill then passed during this past legislative session
  - It is felt that the bill that passed neglected the time and expertise that went into the recommendations that were made

- It is important to continue to work with youth, work with restorative practices to make sure all voices are heard, taking the work outside the building to break the status quo inside the building
- Everyone needs to engage with lawmakers to take a stake in the charge, making sure that the voice is unified
- Bellwether is going to support the suspension and expulsion subgroup to help position new recommendations and with research
- It was noted that this group needs to prioritize bringing in the voices of those who these recommendations are impacting
- When the DOL presented to the JJPOC the number of youths disengaged from school and employment it was shocking to many and really showed that there is a problem and ripple effects will be seen soon, especially since the systems are not prepared for this
- The idea of reaching out to committee chairs, inviting other legislators, or engaging other workgroups in these conversations was brought up
- Those who work directly with youth believe that suspensions and expulsions have been much higher this year than in the past, this creates an avenue for these recommendations to make a huge impact
- It was noted that there needs to be a reset and recalibration, then bringing those who are advocating for these recommendations to the table for accountability
- Next Steps
  - An email will be sent out to lay out the recommendations that were made and what did not get passed so everyone can get an idea of where the committee is at

**Next Meeting: July 25, 2022, 2:00-3:30pm**