



JJPOC Education Workgroup MEETING

JULY 31ST, 2023

9:30 am- 11:00 am

Web-Based Meeting – Zoom

THIS MEETING DOES CONTAIN A PRESENTATION- DISCUSSIONS AND UPDATES

Attendance

Agata Raszczyk-Lawska	Jennifer Lussier
Amy Vatner	Joanne Tremblay Jackson
Andrew Feinstein	Kathryn Meyer
Colleen Olsen	Kelly Orts
Fran Rabinowitz	Nany DeCrescenzo

TYJI Staff

Robyn Porter	Brittany LaMarr
Sharmese Walcott	Paul Klee
Talia Nunez	Aishwarya Sreenivasan
Vin Duva	Sydney De Lannoy
Virginia Brown	

Meeting Summary

1. CT Landscape Analysis on College Applications & High School Discipline

- TYJI led the presentation and found that college applications request information regarding a school discipline history and those who have experienced discipline in high school are experiencing greater barriers in pursuing higher education.
- CT has 19 public college/universities
- CT has 18 private college/universities
- Out of 37 colleges/universities in CT 18 accept Common App
- In 2021-2022 Common App removed questions requiring applications to disclose disciplinary history, however some private college/universities add extra materials where they ask for disciplinary history.
- TYJI gave an example of the questions asked for disciplinary history
- Additionally, the racial and ethnic disparity we saw among students withdrawing from the application process to colleges/universities.
- 31% of black students and 21% of Latinx students were deterred due to these questions
- TYJI reported CT Community College application and what they ask for. They affirmed that they do not ask for disciplinary



- UConn has a Behavioral history review committee. They do ask for disciplinary and criminal history and if not, they can dismiss application. They review and decide whether you can be accepted to the University. They allow the applicant to provide a personal statement for any incident.
- TYJI showed the schools that have the common app, however, do ask for disciplinary history. A PDF was created for students to be aware of these schools.
- TYJI reported that in student's their educational record, in order for a suspension or expulsion to be expunged, that student has to graduate from high school. Meaning, if they didn't graduate it won't be expunged.
- TYJI asked for questions.
- Workgroup member asked if there is any established reported or understood reason that any of this information if that person is going to be successful in a collegiate environment
- TYJI responded that it is due to risk potentially posed to the campus. Unfortunately, the best predictor of crime is previous crime and even though disciplinary action is different from crime they are almost treated the same
- Workgroup member expressed that firearms/weapons should not be expunged and how does graduation expunge something. Some of these can be expunged earlier.
- TYJI reported that they agreed and reported that they went to a RED meeting and a student had a knife and it was perceived as a gun and now it is in the record.
- Workgroup member reported that some students are expelled because of weapons and expressed that questions should be asked first. Some students have to go through some dangerous neighborhoods to get to school. They shared a story of a young woman who had a weapon because she was previously raped in a bus. The weapon was found in school and then was on her record. Workgroup member emphasized that there needs to be a why.
- TYJI agreed and reported that he has found data that the majority of students with weapons is due to transportation
- Workgroup member reported that there are many cases at the center for children's advocacy. They reported that they see kids up for expulsion, for something that's being perceived as a deadly weapon when they didn't know that it was with them. A parent urged them to bring it with them to school or needed for protection. Workgroup member then proposed a legislative change at minimum to remove that piece that weapons are not expunged from their record. Furthermore, workgroup member reported that some students could also be getting disciplined due to a disability that is not taken into consideration
- TYJI reported that focus groups reported that there is no transportation due to being 4 miles away from school. Other schools are just a mile, however some of these neighborhoods are unsafe.



- Workgroup member reported that there is also weather to consider for transportation. They also pointed out that some questions in the application process are vague and tricky. Workgroup member proposed to find information of why colleges/universities ask these questions. Furthermore, they reported that as much as we try to keep the school records as true to kind of reality and they're not always showing the entire picture of what's happened.
- Workgroup member reported that a child without a record is not necessarily an indicator of whether or not that child once they're a young adult in a college setting, where there's alcohol, where there's a lack of information about consent all the way in which young people can hurt each other. Furthermore, Workgroup member reported that there is no clear indication that if a student has a clean record, they won't make a mistake in college/universities. They continued and reported that children make mistakes and children do things because they're developing. They continued and asked how is it as an institution that teaches young adults and expressed that this is a disservice and can use the information against that young adult for something that may have occurred when the child was a child. Workgroup member expressed that they think it just perpetuates our notions about what certain behavior and certain characteristics are worthy of or are expected from. Workgroup member reported that this applies to firearm incident.
- Another Workgroup member informed that there was a bill that would have prohibited the consideration of criminal background history in admissions during the admissions process, however it did not pass. It was due to the committees in ability to come to an agreement as to what convictions should be considered. Additionally, they reported that colleges/universities have these concerns because they have to house these students. Workgroup member reported of an incident with a student who asked their principal if they needed to disclose their disciplinary history. Principal replied that student did not have to because it was expunged, however the school did not agree. The school asked if student had ever been found guilty. They then rescinded their offer for enrollment for student violating the code of conduct. Workgroup member brought up the idea to look into if there's any data have been collected about who actually takes advantage of the expungement opportunity.
- TYJI agreed and reported that the common app had removed a criminal history as a question before they removed disciplinary history.
- Workgroup member asked if their job is to recommend or actually do the job and make changes with higher education.
- TYJI reported that they can invite higher education to the conversation
- Workgroup member reported that they would love to have the conversation



- Workgroup member brought up the discretion that impacts the black and Latino community and asked what accountability with we put in place so that the stigma is removed. Additionally, they emphasized what the previous member said, is this the best way to determine future behavior
- TYJI agreed and asked who is advocating for these young people
- Workgroup member reported that there is a deeper conversation to have with higher education. They reported that the violation that is happening with women, the violence that happens on our campuses, whether it be physical violence or intellectual violence, all the things that we see in higher Ed. It would seem to the workgroup member that the institution should be more concerned about how it is that it that it tracks its own environment and supports young people, that within the environment rather than an artificial way and a removed way of trying to figure out whether or not a child a child, then, is going to be a person who harms. Workgroup reported that higher ed has lost control of their space and this approach is a cop out.
- TYJI reported that they wrote down follow up research questions
- Workgroup member from Full Circle Youth Empowerment reported that this is a major issue. They reported that the youth they service have it in their record that they had a weapon, however when asked they report that it due to the unsafe neighborhoods, they are walking in.
- TYJI agreed.
- Workgroup member reported that these children have been robbed and raped. They asked what can be done to make it safer for them so that they do not have to have the need for weapons.
- Workgroup member reported that usually it's a mandatory expulsion in the school is just following what the law requires. so, they don't really have the ability to say, well, you know, it's a safety thing we understand. Furthermore, Workgroup member reported that this needs to be addressed as well.
- Workgroup member reported that they agree, and they said that they are working with Hartford to have a risk assessment when a weapon is uncovered. Workgroup member shared a story of a student who came to school, and they found a weapon and they realized that something wasn't right was because he was wearing a hoodie. When they took the hoodie down. They saw he had bandaged himself from having been cut up the night before. So, he still made it to school, school was still important to him. Additionally, Workgroup member reported that what we have signed releases for some of our younger students where some of the staff go and do walking buses all right, because unfortunately, there's so much disconnection as well in the neighborhoods amongst the neighbors that they don't automatically connect to walk together.



- Workgroup member reported that currently, the law is that there is a move towards a mandatory expulsion hearing, but that does not necessarily mean that the student will be expelled. They also reported that students are required to disclose or provide some information as to disciplinary history and criminal history. They are given the opportunity to explain the situation. Workgroup member then asked TYJI asked how this issue came to the group and what are the next steps
- TYJI reported that in the work plan this came up in conversation and asked if the group would like to invite higher ed to the conversation or if there are other steps.
- Workgroup member suggested that when speaking with higher ed to have reports and where policy stands before hand so the meeting can be more efficient.

2. Suspension & Expulsion Workplan Review

- TYJI reported the recommendations were passed on Public Acts 23-167
- TYJI reported that the chairs are meeting to draft work plan for subgroup. They reported that the recommendations are now take the burden off the subgroup to do the work, but now put it on the State Department of Education to come back and produce reports. so then, the question is, what is the role of the subgroup?
- TYJI asked if the chairs want to add to this
- Workgroup member reported that they hope they don't just oversee, however be more involved.
- Another workgroup member reported that Tow has done a great job of giving the exact piece of the statute that came in. the responsibility of whom needs to Take care of this. And when it is due, just so that everyone can see it.
- TYJI shared what subgroup is still responsible for. TYJI reported that they will collaborate with CT school Discipline, and revisit recommendation on classroom size.

3. Next Steps

- TYJI reported that next meeting is September where TYJI will give us an update on the focus groups that he's conducted with young people. Workgroup can decide when to ask for updates from the State agencies if advance for the deadlines. TYJI reported that they can also show what came out of the suspension and expulsion subgroup.
- Workgroup member pointed out that they have been able to put together stories of the youngest youth impacted thanks to the focus groups.