

Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice
Summary of Organizing Meeting, October 11, 2011
National Harbor, Maryland

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) convened an organizational meeting of the reconstituted Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (FACJJ) on October, 11, 2011, at the Gaylord Hotel and Conference Center at the National Harbor, MD. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce FACJJ members and OJJDP leadership, provide an overview of OJJDP, develop a framework for FACJJ's role in advising OJJDP, and elect a chair and vice chair.

Call to Order and Introductions

Robin Delany-Shabazz, Designated Federal Official (DFO) from OJJDP, called the meeting to order and asked FACJJ members to introduce themselves and explain how they became involved in juvenile justice. Members represent an array of disciplines and include parent advocates, law enforcement, attorneys, elected officials, law professors, youth, and tribal representatives. They identified several areas of concern: disproportionate minority contact (DMC), juvenile detention alternatives, community alternatives, crossover issues, Mexican drug cartels and their monetary influence on youth, early intervention, and American Indian and Alaska Native youth in state and Federal court and prison systems.

Welcome and Overview of OJJDP

Acting OJJDP Administrator Jeff Slowikowski welcomed members and thanked them for agreeing to serve on the revamped FACJJ. The restructured FACJJ is comprised of 14 primary members and 14 alternate members, each serving a term of two years. . OJJDP deliberately redesigned the FACJJ as a relatively small working advisory committee to make it more cost efficient and able to respond rapidly to emerging issues. Mr. Slowikowski stressed that he wants the FACJJ to do more than provide feedback to the State Relations and Assistance Division (SRAD), which provides formula and block grants to the states. He wants the FACJJ to become familiar with the full depth of OJJDP's work and offer substantive input to the agency.

The following OJJDP leaders gave brief overviews of office activities:

- Marilyn Roberts, Deputy Administrator, Programs
- Melodee Hanes, Acting Deputy Administrator, Policy
- Kellie Dressler, Acting Administrator, Demonstration Programs Division
- Greg Thompson, Associate Administrator, SRAD
- Elissa Rumsey, Compliance Monitoring Coordinator
- Will Bronson, Deputy Associate Administrator, Child Protection Division
- Catherine Doyle, Director, Communications Unit

The speakers noted that OJJDP is the only Federal office focused on juveniles and that Attorney General Eric Holder is committed to youth justice and prevention, as evidenced by his signature initiative, Defending Childhood, and the new partnership with the U.S. Department of

Education to keep kids in schools and out of juvenile facilities by promoting positive school discipline practices. They also talked about a science advisory board subcommittee on juvenile justice research and announced the release of a new peer-reviewed research journal and research Web site.

Peter Brien with the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) within the Office of Justice Programs distributed copies of *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch* and discussed the purpose of a Federal Advisory Committee and the role of its members. He indicated that all FACJJ advice to the President, Congress, and OJJDP is to be provided through the DFO and OJJDP. Charlie Moses, also with OGC, discussed conflicts of interest and other ethical issues that might arise for FACJJ members. He asked that each participant sign and return to the DFO a "Certification of No Conflict and Non-Disclosure" document. He discussed examples where a conflict of interest could arise, and noted that as long as members are using Federal funds for FACJJ business they cannot use these Federal funds to lobby Congress.

Working Lunch

During a working lunch Mr. Slowikowski discussed the history of the FACJJ, the state of OJJDP, and Office priorities.

- **FACJJ History:** Statute requires that FACJJ members be selected from the State Advisory Groups (SAGs). The previous FACJJ included 56 members who provided recommendations to the President, Congress, and OJJDP through written reports. These reports became the focus of the FACJJ, and did not facilitate the advisory group addressing emerging issues in a timely manner. OJJDP reorganized the FACJJ into a smaller committee so that the agency could reach out for FACJJ input from the field about a number of issues including policies and legislation. Mr. Slowikowski said that the advice the FACJJ is mandated to provide to the President and Congress can be in the form of a letter, memorandum or briefing, and can be provided at any time.
- **State of OJJDP:** The 2002 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which was due for reauthorization in 2006, continues to guide OJJDP activities. The primary drawback to the 2002 Act is that it does not reflect current practice. It appears very unlikely that reauthorization will happen this year. The outlook for funding for the Office does not look positive, with significant cuts being proposed by Congress.
- **OJJDP Priorities:** For the past 2 years OJJDP has published a program plan explaining Office priorities and its ideas on how to address these priorities even though the Office's priorities are being set by Congress, which allocates funding for programs it deems necessary. Despite this, Mr. Slowikowski noted that OJJDP has not lost touch with the field and is paying attention to emerging issues.

After lunch FACJJ members broke into three groups to discuss issues the FACJJ and OJJDP need to address. Ms. Delany-Shabazz also asked members to sign up or nominate individuals for the offices of chair and vice chair of the FACJJ.

Group Reports and Discussion

- **Group 1:** Robert Listenbee reported his group discussed two primary areas: a series of issues surrounding **schools' reactions** to events that occur in schools and the need for OJJDP to address this issue; and **law enforcement training** about the juvenile justice system and DMC for police officers, sheriffs' departments, transit police, and school resource officers. The group suggested this should be part of basic and inservice training; they also suggested that juvenile justice should get more attention at the college level.
- **Group 2:** Reggie Robinson said his group discussed **evidence-based (EB) programs** (particularly diversion and detention programs and access to these programs); **DMC** and the broader framework it has for other issues; **access to legal representation** in juvenile justice; **school issues** (relationship between education and juvenile justice systems); **valid court order issues**; strategies for implementing **systemic change** while funding is shrinking; and **brain research**.
- **Group 3:** Robin Lubitz reported his group was concerned about **school issues** (school –to- prison pipeline, the criminalization of school delinquency, links to DMC, reentry back into schools after detention, and truancy); **substance abuse** and the trend of sending juveniles with substance abuse issues to the juvenile justice system rather than to treatment programs; and **EB programs** (their cost effectiveness, key elements of such programs, and emerging EB issues).

Ms. Delany-Shabazz asked FACJJ members how OJJDP can help promote change when fiscal resources are scarce. Members suggested putting an emphasis on training using adult learning techniques rather than talking heads; identifying opportunities for reinvesting (for example, many corrections facilities have closed, saving millions of dollars that have not been reinvested in juvenile justice); helping the field vocalize its needs more effectively when seeking funding; and putting a different lens on juvenile justice (for example, alerting policymakers to recidivism rates and the number of juveniles who graduate from the juvenile system to the adult system rather than focusing solely on success stories).

Ms. Delany-Shabazz shared how the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is addressing school issues and suggested the FACJJ could help with this issue. She also said OJJDP is focusing on science-based evaluations and FACJJ members could help inform the field on this issue.

Next Steps

Mr. Slowikowski and Ms. Delany-Shabazz will meet with senior staff and develop areas they would like the FACJJ to address. OJJDP anticipates developing FACJJ subcommittees that would include alternate FACJJ members as well as outside experts. (Ms. Delany-Shabazz noted that OJJDP can only pay for the primary FACJJ member to attend meetings.) She also urged members to regularly visit the FACJJ Web site (www.facjj.org).

Election of Officers

Reggie Robinson, director of the Center for Law and Government at Washburn University School of Law in Lawrence KS, was elected FACJJ Chair and Robin Lubitz, a member of the Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission, was elected Vice Chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM.