



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Office of the Administrator

Washington, D.C. 20531

08 SEP 2009

Harry W. Davis, Jr., Chair
Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice
University of South Carolina, School of Law
1600 Hampton Street, Suite 502
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Dear Mr. Davis:

On behalf of my colleagues at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Department of Justice (Department), please accept my thanks and appreciation for the time and effort that the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (FACJJ) invested in the preparation of its 2009 annual report to the President, Congress, and OJJDP. As always, we at OJJDP review with care the recommendations offered by the FACJJ so that we may improve our programs and better meet the needs of the field. This letter constitutes OJJDP's responses to the recommendations in the 2009 report.

As a component office of the Department, OJJDP shares Attorney General Holder's commitment to research and evaluation that support the development of sound policy and practice. The Attorney General recently told attendees of an American Bar Association conference: "Under my watch, the Department of Justice will embrace modern, evidence-based methods to drive our policy-making process as well as our enforcement efforts to protect our fellow citizens." OJJDP requires all grantees to submit data annually that measures the performance and effectiveness of their programs. For nearly a decade, OJJDP has actively promoted its online Model Programs Guide of more than 170 evidence-based prevention and intervention programs.

We agree with the FACJJ that the provision of training and technical assistance is one of the most important resources that OJJDP makes available. This office regularly polls the field on how we can improve our training and technical assistance. Most recently, the State Relations and Assistance Division of OJJDP surveyed state agencies in December and January concerning the annual national training conference. The office also reviews the suggestions provided by the states through the FACJJ's annual request for information. OJJDP's training coordinator is centralizing our administration of training and technical assistance to reduce redundancies, standardize procedures, and ensure that the coordination and delivery of training and technical assistance is timely and meaningful to the juvenile justice community. Congress determines how much OJJDP may invest in training and technical assistance through its annual budget appropriation and allocation process.

OJJDP's responsibility is to fulfill the mandates and directives embodied in congressional legislation. The Attorney General sets the tone within the Department and determines its priorities in both policy and practice. Within this framework, OJJDP shares the FACJJ's commitment to the core principles of equal and compassionate treatment for all youth under the law. It is not within the authority of this Office to revise or otherwise drastically alter how we enforce or administer the compliance criteria of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. When OJJDP introduces new regulations, they are subjected to a fair and open review before they go into effect. Also, OJJDP staff work diligently with the states to help them comply with the law, and in those instances where a state may not be in compliance, the OJJDP State Representative will work to bring that state into compliance before sanctions are levied.

We agree with the advisory committee that regular and open dialogue with our constituent audiences is critical. OJJDP is presently hosting a series of listening sessions with experts from different disciplines to identify emerging trends and issues, to enhance our collective knowledge, and to inform our decisionmaking and planning. So far, we have held sessions on disproportionate minority contact, research, and child protection issues. Our plan is to continue to host sessions here in Washington, DC, as we identify more topics and possibly hold smaller listening sessions in other parts of the country. Furthermore, my staff and I have been meeting with key advocacy groups, researchers, and other practitioners in recent months to elicit their thoughts and insights. OJJDP leadership regularly holds conference calls with the FACJJ to discuss issues of mutual interest, and plans a listening session with the advisory committee at its next meeting. We continue to explore ways in which OJJDP can expand its dialogue with the field.

OJJDP employs a variety of tools, including its bimonthly electronic newsletter, JUVJUST listserv, Web site, publications, and conferences, to inform the field about official activities, recent developments in policy and practice, research findings, program development, and upcoming events of interest. To promote transparency in its grant making process, OJJDP posts the names of grant recipients on its Web page upon award each year.

As I previously stated, OJJDP appreciates the insights and recommendations that the FACJJ provides through its annual report. From it, we at the Department learn which issues are of the most concern among our constituent audiences, and gain a greater understanding of how well we are performing. We look forward to continued collaboration with the FACJJ.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Slowikowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jeff Slowikowski
Acting Administrator

CC: FACJJ primary and alternate members