Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Meeting Minutes – December 5, 2025

The Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force met on December 5, 2025, from 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Minutes were prepared by Nancy Wever and Sierra Suozzi.

Members Present:

The following members of the Committee were present via Zoom:

- ☒ Judge Holly Harvey, **Co-Chair**, Monroe Circuit Court, Division 7
- ☒ Nancy Wever, **Co-Chair**, Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS)
- ☒ Steve Balko, Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)
- ☒ Amber Becker. Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)
- ☐ Ann Davis, Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy (IARCA)
- ☒ Terrie Decker, Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC)
- ☐ Hon. Kimberly Dowling, Delaware Circuit Court #2
- ☐ Tracy Fitz, Indiana Prosecuting Attorney's Council (IPAC)
- ☒ James (Mike) Goodwin, Indiana Department of Child Service (DCS) Sullivan County
- ☒ JauNae Hanger, Waples & Hanger
- ☒ Liz Houdek, Indiana Public Defender Council (IPDC)
- ☒ Waylon James, Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS)
- ☒ Jill Johnson, Marion County Public Defender Agency, Juvenile Division
- ☐ Samantha Lewis, Wayne County Probation
- ☐ Josh Nichols, Indiana Juvenile Detention Association (IJDA)
- ☐ Kiarra Pearson, Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)
- ☐ Leah Pezzarossi, Open Door Youth Services
- ☐ Kaylee Price, Youth Representative
- ☐ Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS)
- ☒ Ellen Sheets, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI)
- ☒ Joel Wieneke, Child Advocates

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Staff/Guests Present:

Blane Cook, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana
Calvin Roberson – Children's Policy and Law Initiative of Indiana
Kate Province – State Public Defender's Office
L. Addison Bradford – Peace Learning Center

Meeting Objectives:

- Strategic Plan Review – Presentation to CISC
- New Strategic Plan
- Executive Director update
- Announcements and updates from membership

Welcome and Introductions:

Judge Harvey convened the meeting at 9:33 a.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Review and Approve Minutes:

On motion by Amber Becker and second by Liz Houdek, the minutes from the October 2025 meeting were unanimously approved.

Action Items from Last Meeting:

1. Prepare and distribute October meeting minutes
   Person/Group Responsible: Nancy Wever
   Status: Completed
2. Objective #2: Continue working on report, possible presentation to the Task Force in December
   Person/Group Responsible: Tracy Fitz and Leah Pezzarossi
   Status: In Progress
3. Objective #4: Follow-Up presentation to CISC regarding proposed legislation for family access to youth who are securely detained.
   Person/Group Responsible: Co-Chairs, Sub-Committee, Josh Nichols
   Status: Completed

Presentation to CISC on December 10, 2025:

Objective #1 - CSEC: Judge Harvey reported the workgroup has been drafting potential new focuses for the new strategic plan. She shared some of the focus areas for the CSEC workgroup which included supporting vulnerable youth and survivors through legislation and gave specific legislative goals. She noted as of January 26th, DCS will be launching the state screening tool for human trafficking assessments. Judge Harvey noted a goal to collaborate with stakeholders to develop a method of state-wide tracking of trafficking cases. She mentioned the need to provide training to service providers on human trafficking screening as well as continued training for juvenile judges who want to become trainers. Nancy Wever clarified the format to present the update to the Commission.

Objective #2 - Status Offenses: Nancy Wever reported that Tracy and Leah were still working on completing their report. Nancy requested if the Task Force could report on this objective at the February Commission meeting to wrap the objective up for the new strategic plan. Blane reported that would be okay.

Objective #3 – Children with Incarcerated Parents: Steve advised that since his position changed at DOE, he and Joel had a gap in contact. Joel reported the primary outcome has been the collaborative effort with the Objective #4 sub-committee to support the legislation regarding access to families for youth in secure detention. Joel advised that he needs to step down as co-chair of the sub-committee due to his workload as he has transitioned to his new role. Steve advised he is still interested in co-chairing. Mike Goodwin stated he may be interested but cannot commit until after the first of the year. Liz and Joel reminded the group of a recommendation for a potential co-chair. Nancy will convene Mike, Steve, and Erica after the Strategic Plan is adopted to assess leadership roles.

Objective #4 – Child and Adolescent Development into the Justice System: JauNae reported the workgroup has been focusing on family access and gave her appreciation to the Task Force for helping to support the legislation the workgroup put forward. JauNae inquired about the role of the workgroup/Commission on the bill as it goes through the legislative process. Kate Province reported the workgroup has also been focusing on minimum age of prosecution. Judge Harvey asked if there is anything else the workgroup would like to report out as successes to the Commission. JauNae reported she would talk with Kate about other successes to include. Blane reported the legislation the workgroup introduced could be dropped as soon as Monday, 12/8/2025, and the Commission will authorize Mark to engage with the legislation and refer to the workgroup to answer any questions not previously discussed. Blane reported the language of the bill will be as the workgroup introduced.

New Strategic Plan:

Judge Harvey opened the floor for discussion on the new strategic plan. She shared that she thinks the plan captured a lot of the feedback given at the strategic planning session held by the Commission. Judge Harvey highlighted the specific addition of dual-status youth to the Task Force's objectives. JauNae asked if the Task Force would be renamed in the new strategic plan. Blane clarified the reason behind changing the language from cross-system to multi-system to avoid confusion with the YJOC. JauNae asked if the Task Force would still be focused on the juvenile justice system. Nancy explained the role of the YJOC and overlap within the Task Force. She continued to explain the new language would give the group more flexibility when addressing system involvement. Nancy asked Waylon if he and Colleen could take the lead on new objective #2. Waylon agreed to look at it and talk with Colleen about it. Judge Harvey reported having a potential new co-chair in mind for the CSEC. Judge Harvey asked the Task Force if they wanted to add anything and/or if the members felt like the new strategic plan captures the goals of the group. Judge Harvey confirmed with Blane that she will present to the Commission at 11:00 am.

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Executive Director Update:

Blane reported the other two piece of legislation that will be presented to the Commission for support are about the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and any other topics that align with the 26-28 strategic plan. He shared that once the new plan is approved next week, workgroups should begin identifying leads for the new objectives within the updated strategic plan.

2026 Meeting Schedule:

The TF decided to keep its same meeting schedule for next year, convening on the first Friday of every other month. Blane will send meeting invites. The dates for 2026 are:
Friday, February 6, 2026 @ 9:30 am

Friday, April 3, 2026 @ 9:30 am
Friday, June 5, 2026 @ 9:30 am
Friday, August 7, 2026 @ 9:30 am
Friday, October 2, 2026 @ 9:30 am
Friday, December 4, 2026 @ 9:30 am

Announcements:

Nancy reminded members and guests to complete their membership interest form.

Action Items:

1. Prepare and distribute minutes
2. Objective #2 Sub-Committee (Status Offenses) – Continue working on report, possible presentation to the Task Force in February
3. Presentation to CISC on 12/10/2025
4. Complete membership interest form

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m. The next meeting will be on February 6, 2026.

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