



Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Meeting Minutes – August 1, 2025

The Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force met on August 1, 2025, from 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Minutes were prepared by Nancy Wever.

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

Staff/Guests Present:

Blane Cook, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana; Samantha Mundt, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana.

Meeting Objectives:

- Subcommittee reports

- Presentation from Objective #4 Sub-Committee
- Executive Director update
- Announcements and updates from membership

Welcome and Introductions:

Members and guests introduced themselves and checked-in about expected outcomes from the meeting.

Review and Approve Minutes:

Minutes from the April 2025 meeting were reviewed and approved by majority on motion by Josh Nichols and second by Josh Nichols. One member abstained from the vote.

Action Items from Last Meeting:

- Prepare and distribute April meeting minutes
Person/Group Responsible: Nancy Wever
Status: Completed

Sub-Committee Reports:

Objective #1 - CSEC: Nancy read a report submitted by Judge Dowling. The sub-committee is working on updates to their five-year strategic plan. They are focusing on legislation, but nothing specific yet. Blane added that the quick-indicator cards have been printed and a distribution plan is being developed. The QI card is for law enforcement, nurses, and other professions who are likely to have contact with children and youth.

Objective #2 - Status Offenses: Leah Pezzarozi advised the sub-committee has a draft report and is planning to have it finalized by the end of September. One of their recommendations is to repeal the act of possession of fireworks as a status offense. The other recommendations relate to the offense of Truancy. The sub-committee plans to connect with the BEST Youth Initiative to determine if they want to present their report and recommendations to the CISC. Blane added that the Indiana team of the BEST Youth Initiative just returned from the annual convening that included four other states.

Objective #3 – Children with an Incarcerated Parent: Joel Wieneke updated that he is still acclimating to his new role at Child Advocates and has not had an opportunity to gather the sub-committee. Blane advised that Steve Balko is interested in being a member of the Educational Outcomes Task Force and he is looking for a new representative from DOE. Joel shared that he is connecting with Erica Sanders who is running a program at DOC that promotes fatherhood connections. He will check to see if she is interested in taking over as co-chair and will connect with Liz Houdek to see if she can support.

Objective #4 – Child and Adolescent Development into the Justice System: JauNae Hanger reported that the sub-committee has drafted legislation and seeks the Task Force's approval to present to the CISC regarding family access for youth in detention. Since the last time the Task Force met, a personal-contact survey of the detention centers to learn about their practices

regarding family access and visitation. This survey is ongoing work, as some of the centers have not yet responded. Joel presented background information and an overview of the proposed legislation. Members asked questions and discussion occurred.

By consensus, the Task Force agreed to support a presentation to the CISC from the sub-committee to request support for the legislation.

Action Steps:

- The sub-committee will make requested changes to the proposed legislation.
- Nancy will draft the CISC recommendation form and send to the sub-committee for finalization.
- Nancy and Judge Harvey will submit the recommendation form and proposed legislation to Mark and Blane for review by the Executive Committee.
- The sub-committee will draft a PPT for the presentation.

Executive Director Update:

Blane advised that preparation will begin in the next few months to develop the new three-year strategic plan for the CISC. He invites anyone who is interested to participate in that process.

Announcements:

Amber Becker advised that DMHA's new director is Sarah Sailors. Joel shared details about an upcoming presentation at the RFK conference in San Diego. Waylon asked Joel to include him and DCS in any work involving dual status.

Action Items:

Prepare and distribute minutes

Objective #2 Sub-Committee (Status Offenses) – Continue working on report, possible presentation to the Task Force in October

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am. Next meeting will be on October 3, 2025.