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# Youth Justice Oversight Committee

## Data Work Group

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### **Minutes from February 11, 2025 Data Work Group Meeting**

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) Data Work Group met on February 11, 2025 from 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Indiana Office of Court Technology. Dr. Matt Aalsma and Chris Biehn chaired the meeting.

#### **1. Attendance**

##### **Members present:**

- Dr. Matt Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine, Chair
- Chris Biehn, Indiana Office of Court Services, Co-Chair
- Melanie Pitstick, Marion County Juvenile Probation
- Todd Albin, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Kristi Bruther, Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center
- Christine Reynolds, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute
- Kaitlyn Christian, Management Performance Hub
- Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Traci Lane, Madison County Juvenile Probation
- Judge Sarah Mullican, Vigo Circuit/Superior Court 3
- Nancy Wever, Indiana Office of Court Services, JDAI

##### **Members Present Electronically via Zoom:**

- Judge Paul Felix, Indiana Court of Appeals
- Olga Volokhova, Indiana Youth Institute

##### **Members Absent:**

- Sarah Schelle, Indiana Department of Correction
- Morgan Leever, Indiana Department of Child Services

##### **OJA Staff Present:**

- Lisa Thompson, Indiana Office of Court Technology
- Leslie Dunn, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Brendan O'Connor, Office of Judicial Administration

##### **Guests Present:**

- Judge Dana Kenworthy, Court of Appeals of Indiana

## **2. Approval of Minutes from December 10, 2024 Meeting:**

Committee members were provided with a copy of the December 10, 2024 meeting minutes prior to today's meeting. Judge Sarah Mullican made a motion to approve the minutes; Melanie Pitstick seconded the motion. The work group members unanimously approved the December 10, 2024 meeting minutes.

## **3. Update on Data Evaluation Project**

Dr. Aalsma provided an update on the Data Evaluation project, which involves a comprehensive review of juvenile justice data from 24 participating counties. His team has received data from the 18 counties using Odyssey/SRS and all but three Quest counties. Efforts are ongoing to obtain data from Allen, Elkhart, and Porter Counties. Dr. Aalsma also shared a breakdown of the sample size for each site covering the period from 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2024, ensuring that each county has a sufficient number of records for meaningful evaluation. Additionally, he assured the group that the data is stored on a secure server due to the sensitive nature of the information, which adheres to the data sharing agreement between IU and OJA. Preliminary findings indicate that as a youth progresses further into the system, more personnel engage with the record, leading to greater data completeness.

## **4. Diversion Survey Results/Update**

Dr. Aalsma shared an update on the Diversion Survey distributed to the 24 participating counties. The survey was intended to gain insight into the types of diversion programs available in each jurisdiction, the agencies involved, the timing of diversion opportunities, and the data and tracking mechanisms in place.

Key findings from the survey include:

- 84% - prosecutorial discretion after referral to probation
- 53% - law enforcement or police officer discretion (pre-arrest)
- 53% - prosecutorial discretion before referral to probation
- 53% - probation discretion after preliminary inquiry
- 42% - school staff discretion
- 21% - probation's discretion with law enforcement/police during phone intake
- 21% - probation's discretion at intake before preliminary inquiry
- 11% - detention center intake discretion
- 11% - judicial discretion before court
- 11% - judicial discretion at preliminary hearing
- 11% - judicial discretion at delinquency hearing
- 5% - probation's discretion before interaction with youth

The method and location of documenting diversion information differs depending on the decision point. When youth are referred to probation and subsequently diverted, data is often available, but may be stored in various different locations in INcite/SRS/OMS and Quest, depending on the county. If a youth is diverted prior to a referral or preliminary inquiry, data regarding the diversion is often lacking. It was noted that the data could be

stored elsewhere as well (e.g., prosecutor's system, paper records, law enforcement call sheets, school systems, etc.).

Discussion was held among committee members regarding additional diversion opportunities that may be available but not identified due to the respondent of the survey. Perhaps if the survey was sent to detention centers and school officials, even more programs would have been highlighted. It was noted that the definition of Diversion in the YJOC Data Dictionary states, "According to IC 31-37-8.5-1(a)(1), Juvenile Diversion means: (1) a decision made by the prosecutor that results in legal action not being taken against a child, and instead provides or refers a child to juvenile probation or a community based organization for supervision and services, as necessary; and (2) an effort to prevent further involvement of the child in the formal legal system".

Nancy Wever clarified that while the statute designates diversion as a prosecutorial decision, some jurisdictions may have an inter-agency agreement allowing another entity to make these decisions instead of the prosecutor reviewing each referral individually. She also noted that the Diversion grants fund a variety of programs, including those for youth who have not been referred and even some where a delinquent act has not yet been committed. Nancy suggested that if the YJOC is funding these programs, it may be beneficial to explore opportunities to collect data on the youth participating in them (in addition to outcome/performance indicators that must be reported as part of their funding). This could lead to separate reporting of data that aligns with the statutory definition and other data that goes beyond the statutory definition, but still representative of programs offered across the state.

Judge Felix recommended a modification to the Diversion definition to stipulate that "once allegations of an offense are received by Probation/Prosecutor, a diversion is a decision by the Prosecutor to not prosecute....".

Dr. Aalsma's team plans to conduct follow-up interviews with sites to gain a more comprehensive understanding of diversion practices and data entry procedures. It was recommended that the team explore whether counties have inter-agency agreements for diversion decisions that are outside a prosecutorial decision for each referral. This may help create a better understanding of who is diverted, when, and what works, as well as whether there are disparities in opportunities for these programs.

It was noted that as part of the probation quarterly reporting data set, a preliminary inquiry recommendation of "Diversion" has not yet been added to the options. Quarterly report templates are updated by IOCS each fall for the next calendar year, so this addition may not be available until 2026.

## **5. Other Discussion Items**

No other items were brought for discussion.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next YJOC Data Work Group meeting will be on **March 11, 2025 from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm** at the Indiana Office of Court Technology.

The next Youth Justice Oversight Committee Meeting is **February 13, 2025 at 10:00 am** at Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room A, 402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN. There will be a live webcast of this meeting available on the Youth Justice Oversight Committee website: [www.in.gov/youthjustice](http://www.in.gov/youthjustice).