



Youth Justice Oversight Committee

Meeting Minutes from February 12, 2026

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) met on February 12, 2026, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room C. Judge Dana Kenworthy chaired the meeting.

Members Present:

The following members of the Committee were present in person:

- ☒ Dana Kenworthy, Chair
- ☒ Dr. Matthew Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine
- ☒ Stephen Balko, Indiana Department of Education
- ☐ Judge Marshelle Broadwell, Marion Superior Court 7
- ☐ Shannon Chambers, Johnson County Probation
- ☒ Terrie Decker, Indiana Department of Correction
- ☒ Judge Darrin Dolehanty, Senior Judge
- ☒ Mark Fairchild, IOCS, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana
- ☒ Tracy Fitz, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- ☒ Magistrate Carolyn Foley, Allen Superior Court
- ☒ Judge Faith Graham, Tippecanoe Superior Court 3
- ☒ Elizabeth Houdek, Indiana Public Defender Council
- ☒ Doug Huntsinger, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute
- ☒ Waylon James, Indiana Department of Child Services
- ☒ Judge Ryan King, Ripley Circuit Court
- ☒ Nichole Phillips, Bartholomew County Probation
- ☒ Catheryne Pully, Indiana Office of Court Services
- ☒ Magistrate Amy Richison, Huntington Circuit and Superior Courts
- ☐ Sarah Sailors, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- ☒ Nancy Wever, IOCS, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
- ☒ Kia Wright, Voices, Inc.

Members Attended Via Zoom:

None.

Members Absent:

Judge Marshelle Broadwell, Shannon Chambers and Sarah Sailors.

Staff:

Leslie Dunn, Payton Lester, Colleen Saylor, Chris Biehn, Blane Cook, Audrianna Lingren, Sierra Suozzi and Megan Horton from the Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS).

Others Present:

None.

Welcome and Introductions:

Judge Kenworthy welcomed members.

Approval of Minutes from the December 11, 2026 Meeting:

Nancy Wever moved to approve the December 11, 2026 minutes as written; Doug Huntsinger seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the minutes were approved.

Commission on Improving the Status of Children and Legislative Update, Mark Fairchild:

At the last Commission on Improving the Status of Children (CISC) meeting, they discussed father engagement. Let Mark know if you are aware of any good programs. They would like to have fathers with lived experience involved in creating the program. Getting service providers into jail facilities is a challenge; Waylon James stated that Department of Child Services (DCS) has an MOU with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide and pay for father engagement services, so cost should not be an issue.

Mark provided legislative updates as well. The Foster Youth Bill of Rights legislation, SB 15, is moving forward; DCS already has one but this will codify it. It was created with participation from former foster youth. Senate Bill 111 provides a baseline for visitation and access to phone calls for youth in DOC; it did not get a hearing. We need more time to prepare and build momentum for this bill and we will pursue it again next session.

House Bill 1046 would create a non-reverting fund for problem-solving courts; however, it was discovered that there is already a non-reverting fund, it was just coded incorrectly. There is already a large, umbrella non-reverting fund for problem-solving courts (family recovery courts and safe baby courts), but there are questions about what type of funds it can accept, such as whether it can take opioid settlement money. We want this fund to be flexible to cover different kinds of problem-solving courts such as veterans and safe baby courts.

HB 1003 on boards and commissions includes language about the Kids First Trust Fund, which is from license plate sales and is typically used for prevention. The bill proposes that CISC takes the place of the Kids First Board and CISC would determine where funds would be spent. HB 1363 is not moving forward. It included language about what happens when a youth is released from DOC and there is no parent to take custody of the youth; the bill required DCS and the courts to get involved. This issue is being assigned to the CISC's Multi-System Youth Taskforce. HB 1118 is a large expungement bill that clarifies language but we need to make sure it does not make it hard for courts to comply. Nancy Wever asked how YJOC can support SB 111; Mark said they will need to hear from stakeholders in the future.

There are also bills on bullying and online suicide prevention, and use of cell phones in schools. The Bullying Ombudsman Office bill did not move forward due to it having a fiscal impact. The legislature tried to address doxing or sharing personally identifiable information with the intent of causing harm to someone. This could have a significant impact on youth as they post a lot online; this could criminalize this behavior, but no one was talking about the impact on youth. Kia Wright noted that we need a lot of people at the table to discuss what kids are posting on social media. We need to have a lot more discussion before we criminalize this behavior and provide education to youth about the unintended consequences of posts on social media. We need the voices of youth with lived experience.

There are other discussions about adoptions and revising the CHINS statutes. Judicial stakeholders need to be more present and proactive to have their voices heard.

Workgroup Updates:

Grants Workgroup, Doug Huntsinger:

There are current YJOC grant opportunities open until February 16. They have thirty applications pending, but not all of those may be submitted. In the last round, they had eighteen applicants. They have approximately \$40 million left for grants. ICJI will follow up with the entities that do not submit applications to find out why. They want to put together a group to be a resource to communities to assist them with the development of programs. They do not know yet if they will change the funding formula or process. They may pivot based on what they learn from this grant cycle. They have done what they can to remove barriers to the administrative piece but they want to dig deeper as to what is holding counties back. The next grant round will tentatively be in early summer. Judge Kenworthy thanked ICJI for reducing the barriers, such as data collection, by taking that on themselves and Judge King echoed that. ICJI is moving from collecting warehouse data to outcomes: what interventions were provided; how do we tell the story of the way the youth moved through the system.

Data Workgroup, Dr. Matt Aalsma:

They created a Data Quality Evaluation report from Phase 1 involving twenty-four counties as to what data is missing. The second report is on diversion; they did nineteen surveys and some interviews to find out what is happening on the local level as to data quality and how data is being used. Members of the Data Workgroup met with the Grants Workgroup to talk about data quality. The next step is to work with six counties on creating a common data model. They will work with Bartholomew, Huntington, Johnson, Madison, Marion, and Ripley. They will need to develop some common definitions. Tracy Fitz asked if anything stood out about the diversion data. Dr. Aalsma noted that the first step is for counties to figure out what data on diversion they want to record and can we make it uniform across the sites. Tracy stated that prosecutors are looking at what data they might be able to collect earlier in the process. Dr. Aalsma agreed to share how to set up data systems and common data models. Judge Kenworthy thanked the trial judges on YJOC who agreed to participate in the data pilots.

Behavioral Health Workgroup, Mark Fairchild:

Mark Fairchild reported for the Behavioral Health Workgroup (BHWG) since Sarah Sailors is not present. The workgroup is looking at telehealth resources for judicial officers. The workgroup provided all the input that they can. They included some general best practices; is this in the child's best interest or should this be done in person? This topic has evolved a lot so they want to collaborate with the Mental Health Task Force of the CISC to get input and recommendations. With

backlogs, telehealth can be useful. The BHWG also consulted with the Grants Workgroup on behavioral health grants. Judge Kenworthy noted that the executive branch and IOCS are looking at streamlining so we are looking at other groups with additional expertise. Leslie Dunn noted that they interviewed a psychologist at DOC who does assessments and noted that they use a less credentialed person to do the observation piece at DOC, which is then provided to the psychologist; this saves time for the psychologist.

Diversion Workgroup, Tracy Fitz:

The Diversion Directory went live in December. ICJI links to the Directory on their website. This workgroup is sunsetting until June, and thereafter, plans to meet once a year to re-assess and make any changes. IOCS will send reminders to programs to update their information.

Transitional Services Workgroup, Mark Fairchild:

Mark Fairchild shared that a lot of great work was done in the Transitional Services Workgroup (TSWG). They updated the report they did and their task is completed. The CISC Strategic Plan references that the Multi-System Youth Taskforce will be focusing on youth moving between and exiting different systems and what we should do to help these transitioning youth. The chairs agreed to combine these two groups and the transitional services work will be part of the Multi-System Youth Taskforce to address how transitional services will work with all multi system youth. Members of the TSWG who are interested can join the Multi-System Youth Taskforce. Magistrate Foley moved to move the Transitional Services work to this Taskforce and Terrie Decker seconded the motion. The YJOC unanimously voted to approve this streamlining.

Wrap-Up Discussion:

Members shared various updates on the work they are doing:

- Kia Wright: They expanded to Vigo Co. and are looking at community alternatives to truancy and substance use issues. They are trying to start a youth version of Indy Peace-Keepers; giving families a case worker and therapist. They are expanding their Board and need Board members w/policy experience. Let her know if you are interested.
- Magistrate Foley: Allen County had a transition of judges; Judge Trevino started a problem-solving court on truancy; 85% of handgun cases in Allen Co. started as truancy. The new judge is expanding this and expanding the diversion program.
- Terrie Decker: They have 326 kids in DOC; thirty-six girls. Kids under eighteen are not lingering; they are working great with DCS. Judge Kenworthy notes that the collaboration between DOC and DCS is largely due to the Transitional Services Workgroup and the Teams page they developed.
- Mark Fairchild: CISC is sponsoring Youth Day at Statehouse on President's Day. They have a proclamation from the Governor's Office, which includes the importance of the voice of those who have lived experience. There will be an IYI presentation before noon on the Kids Count book.
- Waylon Jamies: The residential numbers are increasing on probation and DCS youth; there are a lot of acute youth who cannot be safe in the community.
- Judge Kenworthy: The Youth Justice conference is in October; all communities are invited, not just JDAI. Let us know if you have topic ideas. She has noticed a hopeful

trend in the traveling oral arguments-youth wanting to be in public service; this is helpful and hopeful with staff shortages.

- Doug Huntsinger: The Drug and Crime team combined with the Youth team to have one team. Their research team is looking at how to align priorities with JRAC. They are looking at funding opportunities with outside foundations. If we have topics we want ICJI to explore, let them know. There are lots of funding opportunities, but we need to align priorities and resources.
- Dr. Aalsma: next week, they are bringing in Kelly Kinnish from Georgia to do a training on trauma-focused behavioral treatment for youth who have been trafficked. Judge Dowling is involved w/this; let him know if we want to learn more.
- Nancy Wever: There is a new chair of JDAI-Court of Appeals Judge Felix. They are releasing their annual data at their state steering committee. Reductions in secure detention have not resulted in more crime. Her team is working w/Dr. Aalsma's team and the pilot sites on building data capacity and improving data.
- Tracy Fitz: They are watching juvenile legislation; HB1249 on direct files on cases with youth with guns. They are looking for speakers on dating violence for a conference.
- Catheryne Pully: CASA Day is Feb. 24; the theme is Advocacy Full Circle. The Chief Justice is speaking as well as a volunteer and a foster youth.
- Senior Judge Dolehanty: Traveling around the state has given him a unique perspective. He sees that different counties do things different ways, but this is a strength; counties adapt to the needs in their communities. Judges do not have a group to talk about what statutes are working; communities find ways to get around statutes that do not work well, such as starting trials in TPRs and CHINS cases due to time periods. It would be nice to have a workgroup for judges to discuss real world issues from the juvenile trial court perspective.
- Judge Graham: the Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges might be a place for that discussion as to what is working/not working in the legislative arena. She is seeing younger kids committing offenses and more firearm offenses. They are having a lot of success with the Parenting the Teen Brain/the Parenting Project. She is hearing that the Clark County detention center may close. Knox County may re-open with out of state involvement. The Tippecanoe County detention facility is on hold; they are running out of options.
- Steve Balko: He is working on truancy; it is trending in the right direction. Chronic absenteeism continues to be a focus.
- Judge Kenworthy: plans to review the YJOC's original reports. She will reach out to chairs to review progress of the past year and discuss ideas on our course going forward.
- Judge Dolehanty asks if we need to vote on BHWG Benchcard, Judge Kenworthy said no, the consensus today was to move that to the CISC's Mental Health Task Force to review.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Thursday, April 9, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Conference Room C

2026 Meeting Dates:

Thursday, June 11, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Conference Room A

Thursday, August 13, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Conference Room A

Thursday, October 8, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Conference Room A

Thursday, December 10, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Conference Room A