

Illinois Leaders' Perspectives on Juvenile Justice Progress, Needs and Strategies

A Report on the Illinois Models for Change

***FAST FORWARD* Project**

Spring 2012

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Fast Forward Project

The goal of the Illinois Models for Change¹ *Fast Forward* project was to hear and learn from a range of influential state leaders on how they view the current state of juvenile justice in Illinois, their ideas on where additional progress is needed, and their thoughts on how best to accomplish the work that remains to be done.² This report summarizes the results of a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with dozens of individuals representing a diverse range of institutions and organizations, including members of the judicial, executive and legislative branches of government as well as private agencies, associations and organizations.³

As the launching point for the *Fast Forward* Project, Models for Change representatives prepared a short discussion paper highlighting what they thought to be issues key to successful functioning of the juvenile justice system, based both on academic research and five years of observation of and participation in the national reform efforts of Models for Change. This paper posed a series of questions for reflection and comment. Topics were included either because of their potential for moving Illinois closer to a fair, rational and effective juvenile justice system, or alternatively, because they represent potential stumbling blocks to the achievement of that objective. Issues included: 1) Juvenile Justice Principles; 2) System Fragmentation; 3) Local Governance; 4) Data and Information Management Systems; 5) Resource Allocation and Realignment; 6) Disproportionate Minority Contact; and 7) Positive Youth Outcomes.

After the discussion paper was drafted, the Honorable George Timberlake, a retired Chief Judge from Illinois' Second Judicial Circuit, chair of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission (IJJC), and a member of the Illinois Models for Change Coordinating Council, contacted potential interviewees who, by virtue of their positions and/or authority, regularly make decisions on juvenile justice policy, programs, processes, and resources. In order to encourage participation in the project and promote full and open dialogue, potential participants were advised that,

¹ Models for Change is a national initiative of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation designed to accelerate the pace of state efforts to promote a rational, fair, effective and developmentally appropriate juvenile justice system. Illinois was chosen as one of four core states to lead the initiative based on the state's strong juvenile justice leadership, potential for collaboration, community and civic engagement, ongoing reform efforts, and receptivity to change. For more information on Models for Change, please visit www.modelsforchange.net.

² A complementary initiative being undertaken by Models for Change is an electronic survey of state and local stakeholders who work "on the ground" with justice-involved youth and their families, including law enforcement officers, prosecutors, defenders, judges, probation officials, advocates and service providers. The results of the electronic survey will be available in early 2012.

³ The design of the *Fast Forward* project was modeled on an earlier successful effort undertaken in 1996 by the Office of Special Counsel to the Governor for Child Welfare Services. That initiative reported on interviews with key stakeholders around the issue of legal representation of clients in Cook County child protection proceedings.

while their organizational affiliation would be included in the final report, their individual participation would not be disclosed. (For a list of organizations, please see Appendix A.)

The response to Judge Timberlake’s outreach was overwhelmingly positive. Over a period of several months, he conducted interviews across the state with individuals who gave graciously of their time and expertise and who were consistently thoughtful in their comments and contributions.⁴ This report is the culmination of that effort. It is organized around the seven key issues identified in the original discussion paper. Each section contains a background overview and a summary of the responses offered by interviewees. Appendix C of the report includes verbatim quotes from individual interviewees on each discussion topic. The paper concludes with a recommendation that a formal leadership group be established to consider and propose next steps with respect to the issues discussed in this Report. Such a group would be composed of key juvenile justice stakeholders who are committed to creating and sustaining a progress agenda for juvenile justice for Illinois.

Issue 1: JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM PRINCIPLES

Background

This issue raised the question of whether it would be useful or even possible for Illinois to adopt a set of guiding principles for its juvenile justice system and if so, what they would be. A statement of principles can be an important tool for articulating a shared vision, for guiding the actions of those who are responsible for implementing policies and programs that advance the principles, for allocating resources, and for measuring the degree to which principles have been embedded in the activities of the system (in the values of those who work in the system). Shared principles can also promote focus and collaboration among decision-makers and serve as a safeguard against proposed policies and practices that do not align with the collective vision represented by the principles.

Illinois has never adopted a comprehensive set of principles to guide and govern its juvenile justice system. To stimulate conversation on this topic, the discussion paper shared with *Fast*

⁴ As the *Fast Forward* project work progressed, we discovered willing partners. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission grasped the significance of the project and has supported the work. The Pathways Partnership – a collaborative of the major reform initiatives in Illinois (Models for Change, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, Redeploy Illinois, Disproportionate Minority Contact, and the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project) – has continued advocacy and progress over many years. The Illinois State Bar Association has provided support and visibility to the efforts and findings of the project. Many other organizations and individuals have contributed to the conversations and conclusions around *Fast Forward*. We extend our thanks to each of them.

Forward project interviewees included the following list of proposed “guiding principles” drawn from a number of sources, including the national Models for Change initiative:⁵

1. The purpose of the Illinois juvenile justice system is to protect the community, hold youth accountable for their wrongdoing, and equip them with the competencies needed to live responsible and productive lives.
2. Individuals, communities and systems share responsibility for achieving these goals.
3. Youth are developmentally different from adults and must be treated as such.
4. Each youth is an individual whose unique personal characteristics, circumstances and needs must be assessed and accounted for in the rehabilitative process.
5. Fundamental fairness is an essential component of a model juvenile justice system.
6. Youth should be placed in the least restrictive setting, as close as possible to his or her family and community support system, and for the shortest possible time while under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system.
7. Resources that flow from reduced reliance on secure confinement at the state level should be made available to local jurisdictions to support community-based services and sanctions.
8. A model juvenile justice system promotes positive youth development by helping communities provide their children, families, neighborhoods and institutions with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary to foster healthy and nurturing environments that support the growth and development of productive and responsible citizens.

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“Principles are great, but we must have a mechanism to match law and practice against those principles. Consensus is absolutely required for major system change and we must start there. To decide principles we must start with values. To institutionalize those principles the process must be inclusive... We need a framework and a focus for all of the juvenile justice work....”

Interviewee quote (see Appendix C).

In general, interviewees supported both the idea of a statewide set of principles as well as the fundamental values represented by the proposed list. Overall, the list was praised for its

⁵ Available at <http://www.modelsforchange.net/about/Background-and-principles.html>. Models for Change Core Principles include: fundamental fairness, juvenile-adult differences, individual differences, youth potential, safety, and responsibilities.

comprehensive vision of an effective juvenile justice system and for its recognition that good juvenile justice policy simultaneously promotes community safety, strengthens communities, and supports the healthy development of young people who have interacted with the justice system. One statement in particular that drew broad support was the idea that the number of youth held in costly secure confinement facilities should be reduced and the resulting cost savings made available to local communities to treat and sanction youth.

Individual interviewees made specific suggestions for strengthening the proposed statement of principles. Some, for example, recommended that the concept of “system” be defined more explicitly to include the full spectrum of youth involvement in the justice system, including prevention, diversion, intervention, disposition, and reintegration. Several individuals advocated for inclusion of family engagement as an important value given the central role of families in a youth’s life and rehabilitation. Others suggested that the statement of principles include a reference to the challenges youth face in transitioning to adulthood and that some acknowledgment be made of the role of positive and negative peer pressure in promoting positive youth outcomes. One interviewee noted that a statement of principle identifying youth as “developmentally different” may make it more difficult to charge and detain youth, thereby undermining the interests of victims.

Beyond individual comments and suggestions, there was overwhelming support among interviewees for the idea that a systematic effort should be made to develop a broad consensus among stakeholders for a uniform statement of juvenile justice principles. Those advocating for this position commented that a standard set of guidelines would help public and private agencies create consistent policies and programs for affected youth and families across different communities and in different parts of the state.

Interviewees recognized, however, that there are both practical and conceptual hurdles to adopting a statewide set of juvenile justice principles. Some interviewees commented on what they viewed as the inherent tension between preserving public safety and rehabilitating youth. Others noted that achieving consensus on every point in a statement of principles is difficult, given the diverse perspectives and responsibilities of those who would be involved in the drafting and adoption of such a document.

Although interviewees favored the idea of developing a common set of principles, they also stressed the importance of embedding these principles in policy and practice across the juvenile justice landscape. One suggestion, for example, was to amend the Illinois Juvenile Court Act to include a statement of principles. Another idea was to seek formal endorsement of the principles by groups such as the Illinois Supreme Court, the Juvenile Justice Commission, and other public and private associations and entities. Other participants emphasized the need

for “top down” and “bottom up” approaches for institutionalizing a core set of juvenile justice principles. As one commentator noted, “[p]rinciple implementation requires buy-in and that comes from involvement in the process including those deep down in any organization.”

Issue 2: SYSTEM FRAGMENTATION

Background

Although we commonly refer to the Illinois juvenile justice “system,” in fact there is no integrated system-wide response to youth in conflict with the law. Instead, the “system” is made up of a set of complex and interlocking parts, each of which plays a different but important role. Youth enter the “system” through different doors, including law enforcement and schools. Once in the justice “system” they interact with other systems – judicial, mental health, child welfare, public health, and corrections. State, regional, county and local officials all have some responsibility for responding to juvenile crime. At the state level, the principle of separation of powers---as well as tradition---assign different responsibilities to different branches of government. Lawmakers, including legislators and chief executives, are responsible for adopting laws or local ordinances that support community safety while at the same time responding to the individualized needs of system-involved youth. They must also decide what juvenile justice resources are needed to carry out their policies, who should receive them, and how recipients should be held accountable for their use. In addition to its role in law-making, the executive branch is responsible for designing and implementing organizational structures and programs for the delivery of services to youth and their families. The judicial branch establishes policies and practices for the successful operation of the state’s judicial system, and oversees the operation of both juvenile detention and probation programs.

While many juvenile justice functions are performed by state agencies (*e.g.* Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice; Illinois State Police; Department of Human Resources, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority), other functions take place within Illinois’ 102- county structure, including operation of the state’s trial courts, detention centers, and probation departments. To further complicate matters, funding to support these operations and services comes from multiple sources at variable levels and with differing requirements and constraints. Layer on the roles and responsibilities of hundreds of local police and sheriffs’ departments, municipalities, school districts, and service providers and it becomes clear why it is so difficult to develop and implement a coherent set of juvenile justice policies and practices based on the best available research and the most efficient use of resources. The people working in these systems (who actually comprise the system) are trying to do what they are mandated to do, but

those mandates are not necessarily “rational” and frequently create tension for both the youth and families in the system as well as those who work there. Some mandates are adversarial by design (*e.g.* court proceedings), and some are unintentionally contradictory for practitioners (*e.g.*, school personnel are frequently encouraged by various incentives to suspend or expel youth for behavioral issues while the juvenile justice case managers are encouraged to have the youth attend school).

Juvenile justice researchers and other stakeholders have long recognized that system segmentation and fragmentation create significant barriers to the establishment of an effective and efficient system of juvenile justice.⁶ Each unit has its own mission, organizational structure, measures of success, and at some level competes with other units for scarce juvenile justice dollars. Without effective mechanisms for linking various parts of the system, it can be nearly impossible to deliver a continuum of needed services across different stages in the justice process (*e.g.* from arrest to probation to secure confinement and back into to the community) and/or across different service delivery systems (*e.g.*, juvenile justice, mental health, and education). Fragmentation also fosters system inefficiencies. Different agencies, for example, pay to build and operate their own information management systems and then separately collect identical information about the same youth. This siloed approach to operations not only wastes resources and but can also actually endanger public safety and, at the same time, slow the rehabilitation and re-entry processes as when, for example, critical information about a youth’s behavioral health status is not passed along from one entity to another. Another problem with system fragmentation is that it undermines a rational system of funding and resource allocation for the juvenile justice process. It also poses the risk that different parts of the system will operate at cross-purposes.

The federal government and some states have responded to the challenge of system fragmentation by creating structures designed to promote better communication, coordination and planning across various parts of the juvenile justice “system.” At the federal level, for example, OJJDP has established a Coordinating Council of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, responsible for coordinating all federal delinquency programs and activities and making recommendations for enhanced collaboration.⁷ Some states, including such diverse jurisdictions as Louisiana,⁸ Maine⁹ and Maryland,¹⁰ have created “children’s cabinets,” designed to coordinate policy and funding decisions across executive branch departments that provide services for children and youth. California is the most recent state to establish a

⁶ See, *e.g.*, Bartollas & Miller, *JUVENILE JUSTICE IN AMERICA*, 5th Ed. (2007);

⁷ See <http://www.juvenilecouncil.gov>.

⁸ LSA –R.S. 46:2505.2; see also <http://gov.louisiana.gov>.

⁹ See www.maine.gov/cabinet

¹⁰ See www.msa.md.gov/

children’s cabinet, driven by a need to make wise policy and funding choices in a time of severe resource constraints.¹¹ New Hampshire law provides for the establishment of a broad-based juvenile justice council “to provide leadership, communication and coordination among those involved in or affected by” the juvenile justice system.¹² Other states, such as Pennsylvania, have developed a coordinated needs-based budgeting process that requires local counties to develop and submit to the state Office of Children, Youth and Families an annual plan that includes the juvenile justice services the county intends to offer and the budget needed to provide such services.¹³

In Illinois, the principal state-level vehicle for juvenile justice matters is the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, composed of 25 volunteer members appointed by the Governor¹⁴ and organizationally situated in the Illinois Department of Human Services.¹⁵ The Commission functions as the federally-mandated state advisory group, charged with overseeing compliance with federal juvenile justice policy and the disbursement of certain federal funds. It also advises the Governor on juvenile justice matters and periodically carries out tasks assigned to it by the Illinois General Assembly.¹⁶ To date, however, neither the Commission nor any other state-level entity or structure has responsibility to coordinate multi-sector juvenile justice activities and resources, including the creation of communication and collaboration linkages among those responsible for responding to youth crime. The *Fast Forward* discussion paper asked interviewees to reflect on the issue of juvenile justice system fragmentation and suggest ways to improve coordination and collaboration among system stakeholders.

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“We need vertical and horizontal connections for collaboration across agencies, across deputies, and across regions.”

Interviewee quote (see Appendix C)

Everyone interviewed for the project agreed that system fragmentation is a significant and ongoing challenge in the effort to ensure public safety, allocate resources, implement a fair and efficient system of justice, and contribute to the rehabilitation and competency development of individual youth. Interviewees also agreed that collectively they share responsibility for effective planning, resource management and service delivery for youth involved in or at risk of entering the justice system. No single structure or favored approach, however, emerged for

¹¹ See www.asmdc.org

¹² NH Rev. Stat. § 651-E:1

¹³ See www.ocfcpacourts.us

¹⁴ 20 ILCS 505/17a-9.

¹⁵ 20 ILCS 505/17a-5.

¹⁶ The Commission, for example, has been legislatively charged with studying the impact of vesting original jurisdiction over 17 year olds in juvenile rather than adult court. See 20 ILCS 505/17a-9(6).

bridging the existing coordination and communication gap that exists in the state. Some commentators favored a “top down” approach, starting with state-level government officials and working down to the local and service provider level. Those who supported this approach emphasized the importance of leadership in stewarding the process. One person suggested that process be initiated by Executive Order, giving it the imprimatur of the Governor’s Office. Another recommended naming a coordinator whose job it would be to explain and promote the idea of cross-agency and cross-sectoral collaboration to relevant stakeholders. Other interviewees, however, advocated for a “bottom up” approach, noting that that most juvenile justice policy making and service delivery occurs at the local level and/or within state-level agencies. As one person stated, “You have to include youth, line staff and lower administration.”

Many interviewees strongly endorsed an Illinois version of a children’s cabinet (or alternatively a children’s financing authority or state juvenile justice council), not only as a way of coordinating services but also as a tool for effective resource management in a time of budget crisis. One interviewee noted that the National Governor’s Association has supported cabinets and commissions as an effective mechanism for formulating policy and setting priorities across agencies. Supporters of a children’s cabinet emphasized the need for a formal structure, with a defined mission, legal authority and support staff. One commentator offered the suggestion that such a structure “should be a statutorily-created cabinet – not a bureaucracy. It should include executive level personnel from agencies, from the executive branches, the legislature and bi-partisan, with specific requirements and processes.” Not everyone, however, was enthusiastic about the concept of a children’s cabinet. Some cautioned that it would be a mistake to import wholesale a model from another state without taking into account Illinois’ unique juvenile justice structure (partially county-based and partially state-based) and circumstances. There was, however, universal agreement that closer examination of cross-entity collaboration and communication structures in other states would be beneficial.

In addition to being asked to discuss mechanisms for bringing system stakeholders together to engage in collaborative planning, resource management and service delivery, interviewees were also asked to comment on the potential usefulness of developing uniform standards and practices as well as institutionalizing cross-sectoral training. Interviewees recognized the potential benefit of standardizing some policies and practices, such as selecting a single scientifically-validated instrument for screening a youth for mental health problems across the state or creating a uniform set of measures for determining the success of family engagement strategies. In general, however, there was not a great deal of enthusiasm for the idea of uniform standards and practices, in part because of the breadth of the task, the likely resistance to the idea in some sectors, and the resources it would take to formulate, implement and

evaluate such standards. On the other hand, the idea of regular cross-sectoral convening drew widespread support. Interviewees noted that interagency, interdisciplinary training not only enhances knowledge, but also builds important relationships among different sectors of the juvenile justice system.

Issue 3: LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Background

Although federal and state governments play an important role in establishing broad juvenile justice principles, adopting legal standards for behavior, and providing resources to support systems of sanction and recovery, the reality is that juvenile crime occurs in and must be responded to by local communities. Victims, offenders and their families live and work in communities and neighborhoods. Even when a youth is removed from his or her home for a limited time, he or she typically returns to the community. Because juvenile crime is local, it is ultimately up to local governments to decide what approaches work best for their communities. In addition, there is now an extensive body of research that finds that community and school-based responses to juvenile crime are both more effective and less costly than other alternatives.¹⁷

At one time it was assumed that police, prosecutors and judges had primary responsibility for protecting communities from crime, including juvenile crime. Evidence now suggests, however, that the most effective approach for promoting safe and healthy communities is to develop and implement a community-wide strategy of stakeholder engagement.¹⁸ A successful strategy includes identification of key public and private partners, rigorous assessment of problems and needs, development of an action plan, and consistent implementation and evaluation.¹⁹

The Illinois General Assembly has recognized the importance of coordinated local responses to juvenile crime. The state's Juvenile Court Act states that "the most effective juvenile delinquency programs are programs that not only prevent children from entering the juvenile justice system, but also meet local community needs and have substantial community involvement and support."²⁰ To effectuate this vision, the Act encourages every Illinois county to "establish a comprehensive juvenile justice plan based upon the input of representatives of

¹⁷ See, e.g. Peter Greenwood, *Prevention and Intervention Programs for Juvenile Offenders*, 18 *The Future of Children* 195 (2008); James Austin, Kelly Dedel Johnson, & Ronald Weitzer, *Alternatives to the Secure Detention and Confinement of Juvenile Offenders*, OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin (Sept. 2005).

¹⁸ THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN COMMUNITY SAFETY, available at www.rcjrs.gov

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ 705 ILCS 405/5-201.

every affected public or private entity, organization, or group.”²¹ The Act further recommends that such a plan include an express statement by stakeholders, including representatives of the school system, the judiciary, law enforcement, and the community, that they are willing to cooperate and collaborate in implementing the plan.²² The General Assembly further recognized the role of local governance in informing state and regional juvenile justice policy by expressing an intent that “county juvenile justice plans form the basis of regional and State juvenile justice plans and that the prevention and treatment resources at the county, regional, and State levels be utilized to the maximum extent possible to implement and further the goals of their respective plans.”²³

The Juvenile Court Act does not dictate the form that local juvenile justice governance should take.²⁴ It does, however, recognize that one possible structure for promoting local collaboration is the juvenile justice council.²⁵ A juvenile justice council is a structural mechanism for achieving local planning and collaboration around community-based needs. In the language of the Act, “[t]he purpose of a county juvenile justice council is to provide a forum for the development of a community-based interagency assessment of the local juvenile justice system, to develop a county juvenile justice plan... and to make recommendation to the county board ... for more effectively utilizing existing community resources” for juvenile crime. Under the Act, the decision as to whether to create a juvenile justice council is left up to each county or judicial circuit. In addition, the Act does not provide for funds to support even the minimal operational needs of juvenile justice councils or similar local governance structures.

Despite the General Assembly’s strong encouragement for the development of local, state and regional juvenile justice plans and its authorization for the creation of local councils to prepare such plans, the majority of Illinois counties have neither established a juvenile justice council nor developed and submitted annual juvenile justice plans. Recently a nonprofit membership organization, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Council Association, has been formed to encourage the creation of juvenile justice councils and to provide educational and advocacy support for its members.

Some states have implemented programs for ensuring that local jurisdictions engage in a regular planning and coordination efforts around juvenile justice issues. Louisiana, for example, has mandated the establishment of a Children and Youth Services Planning Board in each state

²¹ Id.

²² Id.

²³ Id.

²⁴ Illinois, for example, has multiple types of local governance structures, including Local Area Networks (LANS). See <http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/index.shtml>.

²⁵ 705 ILCS 405/6-12

judicial district.²⁶ These boards encourage collaborative efforts among stakeholders for assessing the needs of children and youth and for assisting in the development of a comprehensive plan to address those needs. Each planning board must report annually on the results of its assessment and plan to the state-level Children’s Cabinet, which it turn uses the report for planning at the state and community levels. Florida law similarly provides for the creation of juvenile justice councils in each county and requires councils to develop annual prevention and early intervention plans.²⁷ A successful system of juvenile justice councils has also been implemented in Missouri.

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“Local governance is important for strategic and targeted funding, for proven strategies. That just makes good fiscal and public policy. It leads to services for kids in their communities that are cost effective and yield better outcomes.”

Interviewee quote (see Appendix C)

Interviewees voiced widespread support for the concept of an annual local juvenile justice planning process and for the creation of some type of local governance structure charged with developing and implementing such a plan. Not everyone agreed, however, on whether these efforts should be mandatory as opposed to optional. The greatest hesitation appeared to be a reluctance to dictate to communities how they should respond to juvenile crime and a concern that very small counties with few justice-involved youth might not be equipped to comply with state-level mandates. Everyone agreed that participating counties should be incentivized rather than penalized for their planning and coordination efforts. There was also strong support for the need for at least a part-time juvenile justice coordinator to oversee the responsibilities and operations of the local governance structure and the production of an annual plan. Interviewees also felt strongly that there needed to be some base level of financial support for local juvenile justice governance entities whether or not they are mandatory. Several interviewees commented on the membership and functioning of juvenile justice councils or other local governance structures. One theme was that effective juvenile justice planning needs to be done on the basis of reliable data. Another was that local groups should have access to technical assistance as part of their planning process. There was agreement that system leaders and stakeholders need to recognize the value of regular local planning. As one person commented, “persons like the mayor, judges, probation officers, and state’s attorneys need to invest in the concept of local governance structures for there to be buy-in within the community.”

²⁶ ACT 555

²⁷ See also www.swfljac.org/lee/htm

Issue 4: DATA AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Background

The concept of using data rather than anecdotal evidence to drive good decision-making has become an accepted best practice in the juvenile justice arena.²⁸ Objective information, including data about individual youth and aggregate crime system data provide policy makers and practitioners the essential information they need to design interventions, budget efficiently, and measure the effectiveness of their efforts on a regular basis. Data-driven decision-making also safeguards against system bias. The effective use of data requires a disciplined use of that data. First, relevant stakeholders must decide on key data elements to be collected. Secondly, they must determine what data sources exist, how they can be accessed, and by whom. Where data sources do not exist, additional decisions must be made such as to whether proxy data can be used, whether information-sharing options are available, and/or whether new data sources must be developed, if that is cost-effective. After the collection process is complete, decisions must be made around data analysis and reporting, and the objective bases for those decisions must be clearly explained to and understood by those responsible for operating the system. Finally, those who are responsible for creating and operating an effective juvenile justice system must regularly review the data and incorporate it into day-to-day policy and practice.

As a state, Illinois has struggled with juvenile justice data issues at both the state and local levels. For years, Illinois juvenile justice practitioners and policy makers have lamented the lack of readily-available, comprehensive, timely juvenile justice system data. At the same time, some express concern that the very collection of some data (such as station adjustments or mental health screenings) will lead to expanded criminal records for youth and/or to stigmatization. These concerns suggest the need for thoughtful consideration of the trade-offs between sound (and sometimes expensive) data collection versus the potential negative impact of records on individual youth and families.

This background section summarizes the current status of Illinois' juvenile justice data:

Law Enforcement Data: In Illinois, arrest data is collected by over 1200 individual law enforcement agencies in a variety of locally-developed programs and formats. By law, law enforcement agencies are required to report data on anyone over the age of 10 arrested for a felony offense or Class A or B misdemeanor. Reporting of other misdemeanor arrests is optional. This data is collected in the Criminal History Records Information System or CHRI,

²⁸ See, e.g., DMC Action Network newsletter (Feb. 17, 2009) (citing the oft-repeated phrase "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it"), available at www.modelsforchange.net/publications.

maintained by the Illinois State Police. Collection and reporting of arrest data varies widely, while information on law enforcement contacts that are resolved without arrest or through formal or informal “station adjustments” is virtually non-existent and is not reported to any state agency or entity.²⁹

Prosecution Data: Illinois law also requires that State’s Attorneys report disposition decisions (in juvenile cases, whether or not a delinquency petition was filed) for each arrest in the categories above, using the CHRI system. However, as with the law enforcement agencies, data collection and reporting by Illinois’ 102 elected State’s Attorneys varies widely, with some jurisdictions apparently not reporting this information at all and other reporting it for some cases and not others.³⁰ Information on the resolution of cases through diversion or other informal means is not collected, reported or available for analysis.

Court Disposition: Illinois law also requires the reporting of “disposition” and sentencing data to CHRI by Circuit Court Clerks. This reporting is incomplete³¹ and made more difficult (but not impossible) by the wide variety of data systems and programs utilized by Clerks. And, as with arrest and prosecution data, there is little or no enforcement of this mandate and no apparent follow up on the data gaps in individual cases or from individual jurisdictions or agencies.

Probation: Probation data – including who is placed on probation, what their assets and needs might be, what services are provided, what sanctions are levied and what the outcomes of probation might be – is collected by each county’s probation departments utilizing a wide variety of data systems. Some of these systems are proprietary and developed by for-profit companies, which means that counties must pay for any modifications or upgrades to those systems or for any non-standard reports or queries.³² In part due to the wide variety of data systems in use by probation departments, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) does not currently require or receive case-level data from departments, but merely requires

²⁹ Ogle County has developed, through its Juvenile Justice Council and with the support of Models for Change resources, a method to collect law enforcement contact information to help the Council understand and respond to the needs of youth and families at the earliest stages of justice system contact, while protecting against “net widening” or pulling youth into the justice system unnecessarily. Jefferson County and the 2nd Circuit Juvenile Justice Council have adapted this process and are implementing a similar strategy in those jurisdictions.

³⁰ Recent analysis by the Center for Prevention Research and Development for the Illinois Models for Change Initiative indicates that approximately 47,000 juvenile arrests were reported to CHRI in 2008, by 566 arresting agencies. In that same time period, State’s Attorneys prosecutorial decisions in 7,000 cases and 2,000 court dispositions were reported to CHRI.

³¹ Id.

³² That reality was part of the impetus for the 2nd Judicial Circuit’s decision to work with the University of Illinois (CPRD) and the National Center for Juvenile Justice to develop a web-based non-proprietary probation case management system. The JWatch system, now fully functional, has been made available to other Illinois agencies and probation departments who seek to adopt it.

aggregate data reports on caseloads and program referrals. An exception to this aggregated reporting is the data generated through the YASI assessment tool, an evidence-based risk, needs and protective factor assessment and case-management tool adopted and mandated by the AOIC on behalf of the Illinois Supreme Court. Because YASI data is now web-based and includes individual case-level data as well as aggregate reports, it is potentially available on a real-time basis to probation practitioners, administrators and policy-makers for all Illinois jurisdictions.

Detention: Detention data is a bright spot in an otherwise discouraging state-level data portrait. Through a unique and collaborative effort among the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, and the University of Illinois Center for Prevention and Research Development (CPRD), Illinois has created the Juvenile Monitoring Information System (JMIS), a web-based program for the reporting of every admission to an Illinois detention center.³³ As a result, individualized data on all admissions to detention over the past decade is available and can be used for a variety of purposes, including research, policy-making, and improved decision-making. With funding from the Commission, CPRD recently upgraded JMIS to capture race and ethnicity data accurately.

Corrections Information: At the deep end of the juvenile system, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) utilizes the “Juvenile Tracking System” (JTS) to identify and track individual youth in its custody. While antiquated and difficult to use, JTS’s system does contain demographic information on each incarcerated youth. In recent months, the Department has enhanced its data reporting and sharing. JTS, however, is not a case management data system and cannot be modified to manage caseloads, monitor staff performance, or track program outcomes.³⁴

Parole: Information on youth on parole is currently contained in the state’s AMS system, created for and maintained by the Department of Corrections, Parole Division. While much newer and more user-friendly than JTS, AMS is still primarily a tracking system and, like JTS, AMS is not intended to serve as a dynamic case management tool and cannot capture

³³ The program is the result of a unique and collaborative effort among the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and the University of Illinois Center for Prevention Research and Development.

³⁴ The recently-released Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Youth Reentry Improvement Report contains a more detailed description of DJJ’s current information management system and recommends the creation of a case management system for Tracking DJJ youth, case planning and monitoring system outcomes.

comprehensive information on an individual youth’s case plan, needs, strengths, progress, family support or other elements essential to successful youth reentry and aftercare.³⁵

Services: While not typically viewed as a traditional “juvenile justice data system,” the IDHS E-Cornerstone data system contains valuable – but often untapped – information on the programs and services provided with state and federal funds by community-based providers, as well as data on the individual youth and families served by these programs.³⁶ For those programs utilizing YASI assessments (including CCBYS, UDIS and Redeploy Illinois), E-Cornerstone contains potentially rich data on the individual and aggregate needs, risks, strengths and outcomes of youth served by programs intended to serve juvenile justice involved or at-risk youth.

The end result is that there is a patchwork of state and local data systems. Each of these systems has limitations and exists in a silo. As a practical matter tracking an individual youth’s progression through the juvenile justice system is currently nearly impossible. Use of aggregate data to track youth needs, whether and how those needs are met and the outcomes we achieve or do not achieve with the use of public resources is also hampered. Connecting juvenile justice system data with other public-system data, such as child welfare, education, public health, public aid or even adult criminal justice system data is difficult and requires collaboration around issues of access and use.

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“Much work has been done on common data systems throughout Illinois, but much more must be done. There are many state agencies that are currently spending millions of dollars on data upgrades without any meaningful discussion among them.”

Interviewee quote (see Appendix C)

In their comments, interviewees noted that there are several different dimensions to any discussion of efforts to improve the collection, analysis and use of juvenile justice data in Illinois. These include the identification of core data elements, the challenges of implementing a

³⁵ With Models for Change and IJC fiscal support and technical assistance, DJJ has recently launched an inter-agency, multi-disciplinary partnership to implement an enhanced screening, assessment and individualized case planning system as well as develop the IT structures required to support this model. This model would drive both in-facility services and aftercare and post-release supervision and support. While promising, Illinois must invest in and support DJJ’s data improvement efforts to ensure continued, meaningful and sustainable progress on identifying and meeting youth needs and developing policy and programs which enhance both public safety and youth outcomes.

³⁶ The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services also maintains a statewide provider data base that is a useful source on available services.

common data system, the role of information-sharing, and the importance of involving user groups in the development of good management information systems.

There was unanimous agreement among participants on the value of developing a system-wide set of core juvenile justice data elements, together with a uniform set of definitions. Many saw this effort as a first step in working collaboratively across state departments and local jurisdictions to improve Illinois's ability to use data to make individual youth decisions, identify broader trends, and formulate effective juvenile justice policies. Several of those interviewed expressed the view that the list of common data elements should be limited and simple.

On the issue of the desirability of developing a model data system, there was widespread support for the concept but also a recognition that such an initiative poses many logistical, and financial challenges. Several commentators advocated for agreement on a shared set of outcome measures as a prerequisite to any discussion of a comprehensive juvenile data system. For example, would such a system focus on measuring positive outcomes such as enhanced school attendance and graduation rates, or would it be limited to a more traditional approach aimed at collecting static data such as recidivism rates? Others noted the need to incorporate unique identifiers in any model data system so that individual youth could be tracked over time and the impact of policies and programs on youth (individually and collectively) could be assessed. Another hurdle cited by commentators was a perceived widespread culture that data is "owned" by the entity that collects it. Model data sharing agreements would have to be developed and put into place to begin to change this culture. In sum, commentators agreed that a good starting point for beginning to collect and use juvenile justice data more effectively in Illinois would be to develop a common set of data points and a glossary of shared terminology and to strategize about ways to ensure greater access to comprehensive "real time" data.³⁷

Issue 5: RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND REALIGNMENT

Background

Interviews with *Fast Forward* participants took place against the backdrop of the worst financial crisis in Illinois history. Interviewees were keenly aware of the impact of the state's budget on all participants in the juvenile justice system and the need to fashion strategies that maximize existing resources and seek out new revenue opportunities wherever possible. Two successful examples of this dual approach are the institutionalization of Redeploy Illinois and the effort to

³⁷ Although the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority publishes an annual report on juvenile justice and risk factor data, the data used to produce the report is typically several years old.

claim federal dollars to pay for services that would otherwise be paid out of state general revenue funds.

Redeploy Illinois was established as a pilot project by the Illinois General Assembly in 2004. The goal was to adjust Illinois' perverse sentencing system by which youth who could be treated effectively and less expensively in their own communities would be committed to the state youth corrections system, thereby transferring financial responsibility from the local to the state budget. Although many communities would have preferred to keep youth in their home communities, especially in light of the growing body of research that supports such an approach, they felt that they lacked the available resources to do so. To address this issue, Redeploy Illinois provides counties with the financial resources they need to provide comprehensive services to youth who would otherwise be committed to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. Since its establishment, Redeploy Illinois has emerged as a national model for juvenile justice reform.³⁸ It has now become a line item in the state's budget and is available to large as well as small counties/judicial circuits throughout the state. It should be noted, however, that although Redeploy Illinois has meant that many fewer youth in participating jurisdictions are being committed to IDJJ, to date no actual cost savings have been achieved because Illinois continues to operate eight facilities, many with with excess capacity.³⁹

Another area in which Illinois has made progress in resource reallocation has been federal claiming for eligible Medicaid expenses for youth leaving the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. The Governor's Office facilitated the complicated process of federal claiming and Illinois is now successfully receiving federal Medicaid funds for this population of youth. In addition, two pieces of legislation adopted by the General Assembly during the 2011 legislative session have paved the way for Illinois to begin claiming Title IV-E dollars for justice system involved youth. The Governor's Office has also committed to facilitating Title IV-E claiming by local jurisdictions.

Another initiative to improve the effectiveness of juvenile justice programming is the promotion and use of evidence-based programs (EBPs) by state and local service providers, including probation offices. Although EBPs are being used successfully in pockets throughout the Illinois juvenile system, to date there is no systematic mandate that ties public funds to the use of EPBs in the assessment and treatment of youth in the justice system.

³⁸ REDEPLOY ILLINOIS ANNUAL REPORT 4 (January 2010).

³⁹ The John Howard Association has issued a series of reports on each of Illinois' IDJJ facilities, including the actual population to capacity ratios for each. As of August, 2011 there were approximately 600 excess "beds" in IDJJ facilities. The John Howard Association reports are available at www.thejha.org.

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“We have to have more attention to an adequate continuum of care and less reliance on acute and secure care.”

Interview quote (see Appendix C).

Interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that community-based alternatives are more effective and less expensive than commitment to secure confinement. As a result, many focused their comments on opportunities for shifting available resources from costly secure confinement options to community-based alternatives by reducing detention and IDJJ populations, either by limiting the number of youth who are committed to secure care and/or implementing effective strategies for returning committed youth more quickly and successfully to their communities. At the front end, there was widespread familiarity with and support for Redeploy Illinois. As one interviewee remarked, “While we need an analysis of all funds and expenses, in other words financial mapping of the juvenile justice system, the real answer that we all know is Redeploy.” Several supporters of the Redeploy program suggested that the program be revamped so that there are more incentives for participating jurisdictions and no penalties for a jurisdiction that acts in good faith but nonetheless is unable to meet its commitment reduction targets. Others urged faster reimbursements for service providers, noting the strain on providers resulting from the current lag in payments by the State of Illinois. Another suggestion was that more transportation dollars should be made available to participating communities, particularly in rural areas with limited local programming. Although there was universal support for increasing the Redeploy budget, there was also a tacit recognition that the full promise of Redeploy Illinois will not be achieved until one or more IDJJ facilities is closed and the cost savings made available to local communities to provide a broader array of youth and family-specific sanctions and services.

Still focused on the front end of the system, several interviewees suggested that fewer youth would be sentenced to secure confinement if judges were required to consider risk and needs from some sort of common objective assessment tool. One person went so far as to suggest that a financial penalty be levied against a county that made an “inappropriate commitment.” Another favored giving IDJJ explicit authority to refuse to accept a youth who did not need nor could not benefit from a term of secure confinement.⁴⁰

In addition to supporting alternatives to IDJJ commitments, several interviewees advocated for more effective approaches to reintegrating confined youth back into the community and reducing the high level of return to secure confinement that currently exists. There was strong

⁴⁰ Effective January 1, 2012 P.A. 97-0362 requires judges to make an explicit finding that a commitment to DJJ is the least restrictive alternative available as a sentencing option. The new legislation is expected to reduce the number of commitments to DJJ over time.

support for the idea of abandoning set times for release and moving to an approach in which the length of time is as short as possible as determined through the use of objective criteria about an individual youth's risks and needs. Better opportunities for family engagement were also cited as a critical component in the effort to improve outcomes for confined youth. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission recently released a report, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Youth Reentry Improvement Report, which contains a series of recommendations for restructuring the state's reentry system in order to reduce costs, improve public safety, enhance due process safeguards, and improve youth outcomes.⁴¹

Finally, interviewees addressed the need to spend scarce treatment dollars as effectively as possible. Several individuals suggested that Illinois consider tying public funding to the use of evidence-based services, with a strong evaluation requirement built into each contract or grant. One interviewee suggested that Illinois explore establishment of an entity comparable to Washington State's Institute for Public Policy.⁴² Among other functions, the Institute researches and reports regularly to the state legislature on the cost and effective use of state funds, including those allocated for juvenile justice programming.⁴³

Issue 6: DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT

Background

One of the goals of the federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act is to ensure equal and fair treatment for every youth in the juvenile justice system regardless of race and ethnicity. In support of this goal, states such as Illinois that receive federal funds are obligated to "address juvenile justice prevention efforts and system improvement efforts designed to reduce ... the disproportionality of juvenile members of minority groups who come in contact with the justice system. " Disproportionality refers to the rate of contact with the justice system among youth of a specific minority group that is significantly different than the rate for other racial or ethnic groups.

In Illinois, effort to comply fully with this federal mandate has been hampered by at least three things: the absence of a standardized method for collecting juvenile justice race and ethnicity

⁴¹ A copy of the report is available at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=58025> (Dec. 9, 2011).

⁴² Information on the Washington State Institute for Public Policy is available at www.wsipp.wa.gov.

⁴³ Another promising model may be Illinois' new Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health and Justice. The Center's mission is to equip communities to respond to the needs of persons with behavioral health disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system. The Center was funded by a grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and among other things will compile information about evidence-based practices and conduct research.

data; the lack of a system-wide mandate to collect such data; and a reluctance on the part of some officials to collect such data out of a concern that agencies and individuals do not wish to ‘re-profile’ youth or be accused of intentional or unintentional disparate treatment on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Despite these challenges, Illinois has made a tangible commitment to reducing disproportionality, beginning in 2002 when the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission identified 19 communities with the highest rates of disproportionality based on detention numbers and other DMC indicators. From that group, four communities were provided with funding to pilot DMC reduction strategies.⁴⁴ The successful efforts of one of these initiatives, the Peoria County program, was later profiled in a report detailing the piloting and use of a data template that enables local jurisdictions to strategically gather data to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice systems.⁴⁵

In an effort to improve the method by which race and ethnicity data is collected in those offices and programs that elect to collect and record such information, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and the Illinois Models for Change initiative published a set of *Guidelines for Collecting and Recording the Race and Ethnicity of Youth in Illinois’s Juvenile Justice System*. The Guidelines list several benefits associated with accurately collecting and recording a youth’s racial/ethnic background: 1) allowing state and local officials to know whom the system is serving and better identify their needs; 2) identifying more accurately how decisions are made throughout the process; and 3) tailoring culturally-competent responses to the needs of youth and their families. One of the goals of the Guidelines is to help jurisdictions more accurately identify the youth in their system by distinguishing Latino youth who may otherwise be categorized as White or African-American based on external characteristics. To date the Guidelines, which are wholly voluntary, have been incorporated into the 2nd Circuit’s JWatch system and into the state JMIS system on detention data.

In recent years the Illinois General Assembly has enacted legislation that has enhanced the fairness of the Illinois juvenile justice system. In 2005, for example, Illinois enacted Public Act 94-0574, repealing Illinois’ automatic transfer of drug offense cases and returning them to the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Because virtually all youth who were subject to automatic transfer under these laws were youth of color from Cook County, the result has been to spare literally hundreds of youth from the consequences of trial in adult court. This has been

⁴⁴ The four jurisdictions were St. Clair County, Peoria County, South Suburban Cook County, and the Chicago community of Lawndale. Three additional jurisdictions, Macon County, the Englewood community in Chicago and Sauk Village in Cook County, were later funded for targeted DMC efforts.

⁴⁵ James Bell, Laura John Ridolfi, Lori Brown, COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES: THE PEORIA PILOT PROJECT, available at www.modelsforchange/net-publications.

accomplished without any increase in Cook County petitions or other forms of transfer to adult court.⁴⁶

Although Illinois has in many respects been a leader in efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparity in its juvenile justice system, to date it has not adopted a uniform approach to the collection of race and ethnicity, nor has it as a state acknowledged the role of accurate race and ethnicity data in informed decision-making regarding individual youth and the formation of fair and effective juvenile justice policies. In addition, unlike many states, Illinois has not to date conducted or commissioned a comprehensive study of DMC in the state's juvenile justice system, although the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission has now launched such a study.⁴⁷

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“They will to do better in collecting race data is there but the coordination is missing.”

Interviewee quote (see Appendix C)

Interviewees generally accepted the idea that race and ethnicity data can play a critical role in helping policy-makers and service delivery organizations do a better job of responding to the needs of many youth and families in the juvenile justice system. Given the significance of accurate data, some commentators recommended that the law be changed to require public and private agencies to collect and report juvenile justice race and ethnicity data using a uniform set of definitions and questions. Others stopped short of supporting mandatory legislation or an administrative rule, and instead advocated for the widespread distribution of the Guidelines for Collecting and Recording Race and Ethnicity and the provision of technical assistance for jurisdictions wanting to implement the Guidelines.

In addition to the discussion of data collection and analysis, commentators identified several strategies to reduce disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system. Suggestions included having a continuum of care available within the community, home-based supports, training to prepare culturally competent agency staff, and strong targeted prevention and early intervention programming. Another idea was to provide child and family advocates for youth in court and to train paraprofessionals who could serve in this role. One commentator expressed the view that “the court is the only body which can make things work. We need to use our system in a way that requires all involved to know about disproportionality

⁴⁶ See CHANGING COURSE: A REVIEW OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF DRUG TRANSFER REFORM IN ILLINOIS, Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative, 2008, available at www.modelsforchange.net/publications.

⁴⁷ For a sampling of state DMC reports, see DMC IN THE MARYLAND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM (2011), available at www.goccp.maryland.gov/documents/DMCreport (2011); DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT BENCHMARK REPORT, Fla. Dept. of Juvenile Justice (2011), available at www.djj.state.fl.us/dmc; REPORT OF THE DMC RESOURCE CENTER TO THE GOVERNOR'S YOUTH RACE AND DETENTION TASK FORCE (2008), available at www.humanrights.iowa.gov/cjpp.

and to make decisions about it. DMC will be reduced when we have a better public narrative about alternatives to incarceration.”

Issue 7: POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Background

Positive youth development refers to the concept that all youth have individual assets that can help them develop into productive adults and that it is the responsibility of families, schools, peers and communities to value and support these assets in young people.⁴⁸ Although positive youth development approaches are valuable for all children, they have special resonance in the juvenile justice context. The juvenile justice system has traditionally viewed its mission as responding effectively to the negative behaviors that led to a youth’s involvement in the system. Through that lens, the conventional measure of success has been whether a youth recidivates. A positive youth development framework looks beyond anti-social behavior and system compliance and encourages youth justice systems to broaden their measures of success to include a youth’s successful transition to adulthood.⁴⁹ Those who advocate for this approach have identified six domains for measuring the success of justice system involvement in addition to recidivism: work, education, relationships, community contributions, health, and creativity.⁵⁰ They argue that success in these areas represent the best safeguard against unsafe and unhealthy behaviors, including future involvement in the criminal justice system.

Summary of Interviewee Responses and Suggestions

“This subject turns the whole conversation upside down. How do you measure and articulate the concept in a way that creates a paradigm shift?”

Interviewee quote (Appendix C)

Interviewees were unanimous in their support for the idea that the justice system should move away from a “what’s wrong” approach and move toward a strength-based, resilience-oriented “what’s right” perspective. As the above quote suggests, however, the integration of positive youth development into juvenile justice policies and practices will require a major paradigm shift. Although researchers such as Butts, Bazemore and Meroe may

⁴⁸ See generally POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth (2001), available at www.ncfy.com; National Conference of State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey A. Butts, Gordon Bazemore & Aundra Saa Meroe, POSITIVE YOUTH JUSTICE: FRAMING JUSTICE INTERVENTIONS USING THE CONCEPTS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2010), available at www.juvjustice.org.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 19.

have reached agreement on a key set of outcomes for measuring the success of positive youth development efforts, interviewees did not necessarily endorse them. When discussing positive youth development, interviewees focused on the importance of promoting enhanced self-esteem and peer interactions, while others expressed the view that a reduction in the number of youth entering the deepest end of the system should be the primary measure of success. As this discussion makes clear, before a public or private agency adopts a positive youth outcome approach it needs to decide and communicate what outcomes are expected and how they are to be measured.

Interviewees also expressed the view that the success of a positive youth development approach hinges on greater public awareness of the benefits of such an approach, together with greater family and community engagement. There is a perceived inherent tension between community safety and individualized efforts to enhance the competencies of a system-involved youth. The latter approach is susceptible to a charge of “soft on crime” unless proponents understand and articulate why focusing on a youth’s assets is an effective crime reduction strategy.

Proposed Next Steps

As this report makes clear, Illinois is blessed with a deep reservoir of individuals who understand the strengths and challenges of the state’s juvenile justice system and who are committed to its improvement. The report, however, also highlights serious concerns with how the Illinois juvenile justice system currently operates. In particular, no one person or entity in the system is charged with developing an overall vision for juvenile justice and a plan for how to get there.⁵¹

It was never the intention of the *Fast Forward* project to develop and advocate for a set of recommendations based on the interviews identified in this report. That important task should be undertaken by a representative group of juvenile justice leaders who are committed to improving the Illinois juvenile justice system and who are in a position to influence and implement changes that reflect the group’s collective judgment. We hope, however, that the *Fast Forward* report will serve as a catalyst and useful resource for Illinois juvenile justice leaders going forward.

⁵¹ The Illinois Juvenile Justice Council is and will remain a critically important influence in the effort to promote sound juvenile justice policies and programs in Illinois. At present, however, the Commission’s authority and capacity are limited by its statutory design, including a membership of 25 individuals who are appointed by exclusively by the Governor.

Conclusion

Illinois has been a leader in juvenile justice reform since the first juvenile court was established in Cook County in 1899. The state continued this tradition when, in 1998, it became one of the first states to adopt Balanced and Restorative Justice as the state's philosophical framework for responding to youth crime.⁵² The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation was keenly aware of this history when it selected Illinois as one of four states to participate in Models for Change, an initiative designed to accelerate the pace of state efforts to promote a rational, fair, effective and developmentally appropriate juvenile justice system.⁵³

In the five years since Models for Change began in Illinois, public and private stakeholders have worked collaboratively to improve the state's juvenile justice system with impressive results. The state's Illinois Redeploy program has received national attention for its success in providing comprehensive services to delinquent youth in their home communities rather than relying on the more expensive and less effective option of secure confinement. Other reforms have included creating a separate Department of Juvenile Justice, returning original jurisdiction over drug offenses to the juvenile court, raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 17 for low-level offenders, and requiring the early appointment of counsel in court proceedings.

Despite these gains, much remains to be done to move Illinois closer to a model system that produces positive outcomes for youth, families, victims, communities, and taxpayers. This is a critical time for juvenile justice reform in our state's history. Juvenile crime is at an all-time low. State and local leaders in all branches of Illinois government have demonstrated their commitment to improving aspects of the state's juvenile justice system. And foundations, not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions have made substantial investments in time and resources aimed at improving the way in which the juvenile justice and related systems respond to troubled and at-risk youth.

But there are also potentially troublesome signs on the horizon. In particular, Illinois, like many states, is in the midst of a severe financial crisis. Without thoughtful planning and bold leadership the gains of the last several years may erode. On the other hand, financial exigencies also present an opportunity for enterprising and innovative public officials and civic leaders to reaffirm the principles of a sound juvenile justice system and to reexamine the traditional ways in which those principles are made manifest. Fortunately, one hundred and

⁵² See Illinois Juvenile Court Act, 705 ILCS 405/5-101 ("It is the intent of the General Assembly to promote a juvenile justice system capable of dealing with the problem of juvenile delinquency, a system that will protect the community, impose accountability for violations of law and equip juvenile offenders with competencies to live responsibly and productively.").

⁵³ For more information on Models for Change and its work in Illinois, please visit www.modelsforchange.net.

ten years of history, experience, research and thought have meant that Illinois has a large cadre of systems representatives, advocates and service providers who are committed to enhanced community safety, better use of resources, and improved outcomes for youth. Our hope and our vision is that the *Fast Forward* project will serve as a catalyst and laboratory for fundamental changes in the way that Illinois' juvenile justice system is structured, funded, and operated.

APPENDIX A:

ORGANIZATION INTERVIEWED

Note: The following descriptions are taken and edited from each organization's website, where available.

Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC)

The AOIC conducts the election process for the appointment and reappointment of Associate Judges, provides supports and services to the Court's Committees and Judicial Conference, develops the judicial branch budget, provides legislative support services to the Court, collects and publishes statistical information on court case loads and case flow, assists in the development and oversight of the Court's Comprehensive Judicial Education Plan, provides technology and information service to the Supreme and Appellate Courts, maintains the Court's website, develops and monitors juvenile and adult probation programs for the circuit courts, and is responsible for administering particular Supreme Court Rules. <http://www.state.il.us/court/Administrative/AdminServ.asp>

Association of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois (ACMHAI)

ACMHAI increases the capacity of individual community mental health systems by strengthening and developing local mental health authorities. It does this by improving the development and delivery of comprehensive mental health services and facilities for juveniles and adults with mental disabilities, promoting the exchange of information, developing a unified state-wide voice, fostering cooperation with other private and public mental health organizations, initiating and influencing policy reform, and assisting in the passage of additional referenda and resolutions. <http://www.acmhai.org/>

Child Care Association of Illinois (CCAI)

CCAI, established in 1964, is a statewide association dedicated to improving the services delivered to the abused, neglected, and troubled youth and families in Illinois. Information brokering, advocacy and legislation, improving policy and procedures, and member agencies are the various ways the association strives to achieve its goals. <http://cca-il.site-ym.com/>

Chicago Council of Lawyers

The Chicago Council of Lawyers is a non-partisan public interest bar association that is dedicated to improving the quality of justice in the legal system by advocating for fair and efficient administration of justice. The Chicago Council of Lawyers works for effectiveness, accountability and equity in the law so that everyone has an equal chance for justice, both juveniles and adults. <http://www.chicagocouncil.org/>

Community Behavioral Healthcare Association of Illinois (CBHA)

CBHA is a statewide not-for-profit membership organization representing the interests of community behavioral healthcare agencies in the State of Illinois. CBHA promotes the development of quality programs providing services for community behavioral health including mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, rural mental health and children and adolescents. <http://www.cbha.net/>

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)

Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice in both adult and juvenile courts. The Authority brings together key leaders from the justice system and the public to identify critical issues facing the criminal justice system in Illinois, and to propose and evaluate policies, programs, and legislation that address those issues. The agency also works to ensure the criminal justice system in Illinois is efficient and effective. <http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/>

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

DCFS's primary goal is to protect children through strengthening and supporting families. This is accomplished in part by helping families increase their capacity to safely care for their children, supporting early intervention and child abuse prevention activities, and work in partnerships with communities to fulfill this mission. In addition, DCFS provides appropriate, permanent families as quickly as possible for those children who cannot safely return home. <http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/index.shtml>

Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) was established in 1970. It is responsible for the management and oversight of the state's adult prison system. It currently operates 27 adult correctional centers as well as various work camps, boot camps and adult transition centers. <http://www.idoc.state.il.us/>

Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS)

Illinois created DHS in 1997, to provide our state's residents with streamlined access to integrated services, especially those who are striving to move from welfare to work and economic independence, and others who face multiple challenges to self-sufficiency. The DHS mission is to assist their customers, both adult and juvenile, to achieve maximum self-sufficiency, independence and health through the provision of seamless, integrated services for individuals, families and communities. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, Illinois' federally mandated State Advisory Group, is housed in DHS. <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?>

Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA)

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DHS/DASA), is the state's lead agency for addressing alcohol and other drug abuse. DHS/DASA administers a network of 170 community-based alcohol and other drug treatment programs in over 200 sites. They provide evaluation, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation to alcohol and other drug-abusing persons and their families, including youth. <http://www/dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?=29795>

Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Mental Health (DMH)

Every individual who suffers from a mental condition has different circumstances that will require a unique set of services/level of care to address their specific needs. The Division of Mental Health (DMH) provides a wide variety of services at all levels for adults and children throughout the state. These services are offered through hundreds of DMH partners "Providers" (*i.e.* mental health clinics, agencies and hospitals), who serve as 'front doors' to enter the publicly funded system of mental health care. <http://www/dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29763>

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ)

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice is a state-level executive branch agency charged by statute with preserving public safety by reducing recidivism while understanding that youth have different needs than adults. Youth committed to the Department's care will receive individualized services provided by qualified staff that gives them the skills to become productive citizens. <http://www.idjj.state.il.us/>

Illinois Probation and Court Services Association (IPCSA)

IPCSA is a voluntary membership organization established in 1969 to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and strategies regarding probation and court services for both juvenile and adult offenders. IPCSA coordinates major legislative, training and programmatic initiatives with the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts. It also works several other state organizations in order to maintain a high standard of service to the courts, the community, and to their clients. <http://www.ipcsa.org/>

Illinois Public Defender Association

The goals of education, interchange of ideas, and camaraderie are reflected by semi-annual seminars serving Public Defenders and court-appointed counsel in all 102 counties. The Illinois Public Defender Association has cooperated with the Illinois State Bar Association and the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender in reviewing and suggesting amendments to criminal and juvenile bills in the legislature. It has also worked with the State Bar Association to develop

model rules and statutes to standardize Public Defender appointment procedures. <http://www.state.il.us/defender/ipda.html>

Illinois Sheriff's Association

The Illinois Sheriffs' Association was founded in 1928 with a goal of creating better communication and cooperation between sheriffs and encourages more professional training and growth. Over the years, the ISA has expanded its goals and objectives to include training and development for sheriffs and their support teams and supporting and creating various youth-oriented programs. <http://www.ilsheriff.org/>

Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA)

Founded in 1877, the Illinois State Bar Association is a voluntary organization whose primary focus is to help Illinois lawyers practice more effectively and efficiently by providing time and money-saving services. Important activities on behalf of the profession include proposing and shaping legislation, educating the public, and supporting the courts and the rule of law. <http://www.isba.org/>

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

The Illinois State Board of Education provides leadership, assistance, resources and advocacy so that every student is prepared to succeed in careers and postsecondary education, and share accountability for doing so with districts and schools. <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/>

Illinois State Police (ISP)

Illinois State Police functions include protecting life and property, enforcing both criminal laws and motor vehicle safety laws, responding to emergencies and disasters and providing a myriad of diverse specialized services to both the public and the criminal justice community. <http://www.isp.state.il.us/>

Illinois State's Attorney's Association

The Illinois State's Attorney's Association (ISAA), is a professional organization made up of elected prosecutors from across the state. The ISAA serves prosecutors by lobbying the Illinois General Assembly on issues that are of interest to its members. The ISAA also provides training and continuing legal education and serves as a network for prosecutors to collaborate on issues that are common to the position.

Supreme Court of Illinois

The Illinois Supreme Court is the state's highest court. All courts in the state operate under the authority of and at the direction of the Illinois Supreme Court. Through the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Court also oversees multiple specialty courts (mental health,

domestic violence, drug courts) as well as juvenile courts. Probation operations and data collection are also under the direction of the Court.

<http://www.state.il.us/curt/SupremeCourt/default.asp>

Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities (TASC)

TASC provides behavioral health recovery management services for individuals with substance abuse and mental health disorders throughout the state of Illinois. Utilizing a specialized system of clinical case management, TASC initiates and motivates positive behavior change and long-term recovery for individuals in Illinois' criminal justice, corrections, juvenile justice, child welfare, and other public systems. TASC provides direct services, designs model programs and builds collaborative networks between public systems and community-based human service providers. <http://www.tasc.org>

Youth Network Council (YNC)

YNC offers diverse programming consistent with their mission of supporting local, community-based youth serving agencies and enhancing their capacity to serve young people and their families. <http://www/youthnetworkcouncil.org/>

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Models for Change/Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission

Hon. George W. Timberlake⁵⁴

Interview Guide

[Pre-discussion activities]

1. Introductions and explanation of the project
2. Signing of Informed Consents
3. Completion of a brief demographic information sheet

[Facilitator's Script]

Introduction and explanation of the project:

1. Good morning and welcome to our discussion.
2. My name is Judge George Timberlake and I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in today's discussion, which seeks to identify barriers to positive outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
3. The ultimate ***goal of the project*** is to improve the performance of the juvenile justice system in Illinois as it relates to youth and greater public safety. We hope the projects results will serve as a catalyst and laboratory for fundamental changes in the way that Illinois' juvenile justice system is structured, funded, and operated.
4. Several other state agency leaders and stakeholder groups are being interviewed.
5. As state leaders who serve in some capacity to affect the children in the Illinois Juvenile Justice Courts, you are in a unique position to inform our process by offering your first-hand knowledge, recommendations, and insights that can ultimately help us to improve our system.

Overview of Procedures:

1. During our discussion, I will ask you a series of questions related to the juvenile court system.

⁵⁴ The interviews for this report were conducted by the Honorable George Timberlake. Judge Timberlake retired in 2006 as the Chief Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit after 23 years on the bench. Since leaving his judicial position he has remained active in juvenile justice reform efforts. He currently serves as a member of the Illinois Models for Change Coordinating Council and as chair of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission.

2. When you answer, please express your thoughts and concerns about each of the questions. Your opinions and ideas are very important to us.
3. Please feel free to express yourself if you disagree with anything said. This will allow us to better understand the areas in which there is an agreement of opinion and areas where there are diverse viewpoints.
4. Please keep in mind that all comments are welcomed – both positive and negative.
5. While we hope for your honest and forthright responses, do not feel obligated to answer questions that may make you uncomfortable.

[Closing]

1. These are all the questions I have for you today. Before we leave, do you have any other responses or comments about the information discussed?
2. Once again, I want to reassure you that everything you said here today is strictly confidential and anonymous. Attributions to individual comments will not be made unless requested by the interviewee. All tapes and notes will be kept in my sole possession for the purpose of writing a project report and will then be destroyed by me.
3. Thank you.

(Sample Verbatim Introduction)

“(Interviewee), this project is aimed at getting the opinions and judgments of high level decision makers in the State of Illinois around juvenile justice. We are talking with many stakeholder organizations and with the heads of departments in state government and member of the Supreme Court and others inside the judicial branch. So, although Illinois is recognized as a national leader in juvenile justice, those who work in it are concerned about the ongoing performance of the juvenile justice system as well as generally improving its performance and so what we’re trying to do is see where there’s consensus among decision makers in Illinois about where we are and where we ought to go. It’s nothing more complicated than that, but we recognize that there isn’t any forum, there hasn’t been any forum for that kind of conversation to take place, so that’s why we’re doing this and thanks for agreeing to participate in the discussion. As I say, the ultimate goal of the project and the paper that will come out of it is to improve the outcomes for kids in the juvenile justice system. As a state leader who serves in the capacity to affect the outcomes of kids in the juvenile justice system and in the Illinois Juvenile Justice Courts, we know that you’re in a unique position to inform the process by offering your firsthand knowledge, recommendation, and insights that will hopefully help to improve the system. I’m going to ask you a series of questions related to juvenile justice. When you answer, please express your thoughts and concerns about each of the questions. Your

opinions and ideas are genuinely important to us. Please feel free to express yourself if you disagree with anything that is said in the question or the introduction to the question and that will let us better understand not only your opinions but also the areas where there is agreement or disagreement among other leaders in the state. All comments are welcome, both positive and negative, and while we hope for your honest and forthright responses, do not feel obligated to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable in any way. It is entirely a voluntary process. So any questions about anything?"

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEWEE QUOTES

The following are verbatim quotes from interviewees on topics discussed during the interviews. They are intended to be representative of the range of comments and perspectives that emerged from the interview process. Organizationally, this section parallels the discussion sections in the body of the report.

Statement of Principles

- *“A key stakeholder conference is a really good idea to foster adoption of common principles.”*
- *“Once these principles are concretely defined, then we need to articulate the operations and do it by administrative rule from those in power. Then we should give it to consumers as a Juvenile Bill of Rights.”*
- *“We must have dialogue among reasonable people over time. The end product should be adopted by state, local, county, not-for-profits and stakeholders as a ‘set of commandments’ and that should be reflected in agency policy statements, funding and strategic planning.”*
- *“Leadership and vision are necessary and as well as a commitment from the top and followed then by communication and collaboration among agencies. Prior efforts have depended upon individuals and, therefore, have led to failure in adopting common principles.”*
- *“Principles are great, but we must have a mechanism to match law and practice against those principles. Consensus is absolutely required for major system change and we must start there. To decide principles we must start with values. To institutionalize those principles the process must be inclusive. It’s easier then to get buy-in. And after that, it’s mostly marketing. Much like primary prevention techniques. Consensus is necessary on these principles. We need a framework and a focus for all of the juvenile justice work. The suggested principles are good and I agree with them, but it is incomplete because we need a statement that juvenile justice is as much a family problem as a youth problem.”*
- *“To put these principles into practice we have to consider that there is a science to implementation. We usually stop with training and policy change, but we have to go further for field implementation. It’s like this: If you fold your arms and are used to doing that and then you’re told to fold them differently, it requires thought and effort. The same thing is true of policy and principle implementation. Principle implementation requires buy-in and that comes from involvement in the process including those deep down in any organization. As to these principles, I agree; however, we must consider that peer influence is left out. And that’s important for both modeling positive and negative behavior. “*

- *“Principles could be formalized and institutionalized by modifications to the Juvenile Court Act. Principles could be incorporated there. It could also be helped by Supreme Court adoption and by associations, including the Public Defender Association. Institutionalization of principles is valuable and we must lead with values rather than let circumstances dictate practice, so we need to think of the child first – not think of the crime first. And that leads to the least restrictive setting.”*
- *“Common principles must include importance of transitions to meaningful lives. We need intentionality about that.”*
- *“To institutionalize these values, branding could help. We need some icon or phrase which can be identifiable.”*
- *“To discuss children as developmentally different leads to difficulty in charging because at arrest we see kids as a threat to the community. The process requires the probation officer to give permission for detention and this principle causes issues with victims who see kids as ‘getting away with it’.”*
- *“Individuality is important as a principle and the example for that in juvenile justice is a child’s mental health issue.”*
- *“You have to get down to the local level.”*
- *“I agree with these principles and it’s important to note that every successful intervention is a long-term investment for which public safety will benefit.”*
- *“We have to include the academy in discussion of principles. We forget that the academy is part of the stakeholder group.”*
- *“An important use of consensus principles is that otherwise agendas might use negative events which tend to define policy. A single incident often skews policy for a long time.”*
- *“When it comes to principles, judges can impose those principles and require coordination on a local level.”*
- *“We have to consider a public narrative in regard to principles and recognize the role of media.”*

System Fragmentation

In General

- *“System fragmentation is a great problem and perhaps what we need to discuss is a one to one-and-a-half year process by which recommendations are made. We have to recognize the different missions of the agencies.”*
- *“Our fragmented system means fragmented funding. The big question is ‘how do communities get funds for juvenile justice?’”*
- *“The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission could take a strong leadership role until there is push back. Then we need to formalize it. OJJDP does it through the Federal Coordinating Council.”*
- *“A children’s commission could be good, but if it’s just department heads, there also should be a watchdog group. There must be both force and incentives to encourage coordination.”*
- *“Performance-based contracting and managing to outcomes should be used more. They’re more nimble in order to adapt to local conditions. “*
- *“Guidelines are good, but you can’t quibble if you get outcomes. Creating change requires working with people to understand and build better performance. “*
- *“DCFS has a model Child Welfare Advisory Council which includes front line providers and it bridges silos inside the agency. You have to include youth, line staff and lower administration. “*
- *“Children’s cabinets could be a good start but maybe it should be the children’s financing authority. Sharing resources is the greatest problem. “*
- *“A children’s cabinet can’t be informal. It can’t be based on personalities. It must be formal and based on authority. It should be a statutorily-created cabinet – not a bureaucracy. It should include executive level personnel from agencies, from the executive branch, the legislature and bi-partisan with specific requirements and process. “*
- *“The history of juvenile justice in Illinois is fragmented and siloed. We have never articulated a vision to allow a child to access needed services nor to be cost effective and productive. For example, few kids have only one issue, including juvenile justice. There’s never been an attempt to put everyone at the table so that kids had easy access. Our systems don’t talk to each other and we need leadership.”*
- *“Fragmentation is a reflection that our funding structure is the problem. Scarcity is the driver now. “*
- *“Fragmentation is looking for a model for collaboration. It has to come from the highest levels. Some states use executive orders to require coordinated planning and unified or joint budgeting. Some states have used legislation and that leads to the best cooperation. On the other hand, we need relationships to bring people together. “*

- *“An organic approach from bottom up could be used. For instance, joint projects across agencies and beginning with a conference is a good idea. To follow up then we need strategic planning and it needs uniform agreement and resources. ”*
- *“A children’s cabinet could work, but it must include a coordinator role, looking for skill sets for joining multiple stakeholders to work together, and you must put dollars into a coordinator and some staff. ”*
- *“A children’s cabinet is a good idea and Arizona has centralized service provision. We should look to that. Delaware and Pennsylvania are good examples of attempts at breaking down system fragmentation, but we also must recognize that fragmentation occurs inside agencies. We need vertical and horizontal connections for collaboration across agencies, across deputies and across regions. Perhaps we need a children’s cabinet at regional levels and then all the way down to local levels. ”*
- *“A start could be to create a flow chart that includes various resources for various problems. A children’s cabinet could provide tools, preferably with both state-wide parameters and specific fact patterns. The National Governor’s Association says that cabinets and lesser commissions are the tool to spread policies and prioritize those policies across agencies, but we must go deeper than appointed executives.”*
- *“To build a children’s cabinet we must show urgency. ”*
- *“Collaboration around juvenile justice is important; however, we must recognize that the court is different. It’s not an agency. It must be recognized as a separate branch of government.”*

Uniform Standards and Practices

- *“Uniform standards are important, but at the local level people see themselves as unique. Uniform practices are absolutely warranted, but they have to include the police, the front end of the system and communities themselves. It’s labor intensive because of the turnover in all of those areas. Uniform practices are needed and good examples are YASI and GAIN but standard practices by themselves are not useful. They must have some method of making comparisons among others.”*
- *“We need to understand common drivers in behavior such as mental health, living conditions and demographics. This is also a resource issue. In other words, better use of resources that comes from common knowledge. ”*
- *“An example of the lack of uniform standards and the problems that arise is that some detention centers have to house kids from multiple counties and they each use a different screening tool. ”*
- *“Do we need common definitions? Absolutely. Particularly in things such as mental health. What are police contacts? What does probation do? ”*
- *“We need to define juvenile sexual offenders. A label can be destructive. Some sex offenses are genuinely predatory but others are behavior that may be normal. Common definitions and standards could prevent damage to individual kids. ”*

- *“Our standards should be to do no harm throughout the juvenile justice system. We can make kids worse than when they come to us.”*

Cross-Sectoral Training

- *“Cross-sectoral training is desirable and there are good examples in the education field. For instance, PBIS and RTI are good examples of good practice and the way to embed it.”*
- *“Cross-sectoral training is absolutely needed and that’s been proven by multi-disciplinary teams. But it must be structured around action steps and it must be practiced. “*
- *“Good examples of cross-sectoral training include YASI and motivational interviewing. More professional understanding leads to better relationships. “*
- *“We have to make sure that resources don’t reinforce bad practice and we have to remember that training is continually necessary for court personnel and other stakeholders because there’s a great turnover in that personnel. Training never stops. “*
- *“A good example of cross-sectoral training is trauma informed practice and assessment skills.”*
- *“Restorative justice is a topic that needs cross-sectoral training, certainly for both adult and juveniles, but more so for juvenile justice.”*
- *“Cross-sectoral training is important and it’s successful. The Court Improvement Project is a good example of that. “*
- *“Cross-sectoral training allows an opportunity for communication across sectors. “*
- *“Uniform training is useful and a good example is the Community of Residential Services Administration. People speak different languages at meetings and it would give the opportunity to develop a common vocabulary.”*

Local Governance

Juvenile Justice Councils (JJC)

- *“Juvenile Justice Councils are useful, but there should be incentives, not sanctions.”*
- *“Juvenile Justice Councils should be required, but only if they’re funded and staffed.”*
- *“It’s desirable to have a Juvenile Justice Council, but the question is, ‘if you have one will they comply with state needs?’ If it’s just a mandate, it’s not useable. You have to have a carrot and a stick. “*
- *“Local governance is important for strategic and targeted funding, for proven strategies. That just makes good fiscal and public policy. It leads to services for kids in their communities that are cost effective and yield better outcomes.”*

- *“Local governance is desirable but we need to begin before juvenile justice involvement. “*
- *“Local governance needs to be a collective group of people who hold the purse strings. “*
- *“Local governance and Juvenile Justice Councils are great principles but only if you’re in it for the long haul, and I mean years.”*
- *“Local governance needs to apply to Cook County, too. “*
- *“I’m ambivalent about making Juvenile Justice Councils mandatory. Downstate is so diverse and so counties just can’t get together and do it. “*
- *“Local governance is desirable but you have to persuade from performance - not just mandate things.”*
- *“Juvenile Justice Councils are preferred to be mandated but I’m hesitant to dictate to local communities what they should do. There should be a lot of outreach and building of consensus around a requirement of Juvenile Justice Councils. We should encourage with attached incentives. “*
- *“Mandates don’t always assure success so voluntary Juvenile Justice Councils make sense. How do you mandate leadership? An indicator of success is that stakeholders agree on the goals. Communication, transparency, and sharing are what are important. “*
- *“Juvenile Justice Councils and local governance are a good idea and maybe their model is local care collaborations. State agencies make very independent decisions and communities are left out so these plans are a good idea. “*
- *“Juvenile Justice Councils should be a requirement and we need to have a statewide umbrella including the sharing of information.”*
- *“JJs must report to someone and the court system is the most likely place to find authority. And perhaps there should be a juvenile justice judges group.”*
- *“You should think of local governance as a community in toto. Think of it as a milieu.”*
- *“Local governance in Juvenile Justice Councils is okay if the goals and protocol are specified and funds are made available.”*
- *“Guidance and oversight should be welcome at the local level.”*

Annual Juvenile Justice Plans

- *“Annual plans need to be strategic and follow the KISS principle.”*
- *“An annual plan is a good idea but it must have accountability and there must be some consistency with those guiding principles and strategic objectives.”*

- *“A plan is useful, but it must be based upon data. That’s critical. PBIS with its data-driven and evaluative processes is a good example. You need guidance for local plans and local Juvenile Justice Councils based upon the principles and you also have to have technical assistance including a central point of contact. “*
- *“An annual plan is a good idea, but only if resources and technical assistance follows. “*
- *“Juvenile Justice Councils and annual plans are good ideas, but there has to be a mechanism to share successes and barriers, a way to present best practices and give examples.”*
- *“Plans are a good idea, but realize that Illinois is one of the few states without a long-term strategic plan for the major service agencies.”*
- *“A plan is desirable if it’s based upon how to accomplish a common set of principles and based upon a set of metrics.”*
- *“The value of an annual plan is real. It can set forth the real goals. A plan needs to ask about relationships with others and a plan is valued as a tool, but it must be evolutionary.”*
- *“Juvenile justice plans need not be complex. They could be in bullet points. “*
- *“For some communities a Juvenile Justice Council and plans are better used for a circuit. Many of our counties are just too small to have meaningful discussions.”*
- *“Plans are most effective if they are for more than one year, perhaps for five years.”*
- *“Annual plans are extremely useful. Currently our systems don’t evaluate what they do. They are too busy, under-resourced, and under-trained for strategic planning. “*
- *“Perhaps a plan should be every two years and then the Juvenile Justice Commission or children’s cabinet could synthesize those plans into a State of the Juvenile Justice System. It could drive funding and priorities.”*
- *“Juvenile Justice plans are useful, but they must be funded and you can’t take dollars from other services in order to plan. “*
- *“There should be a common framework for any statewide or local plan. “*

Efficiency and Effectiveness of Local Systems

- *“Many determining factors may move a kid out of a community, but the community has to have ownership in the process. Alternatives to incarceration must be local. The state only knows the systems that exist. One need is that youth work is necessary and there should not be shame-based summer jobs. Another change is that detention for defiance should be abolished. We need a sense of fairness. Another needed change is in school protocol. You should have to recognize that putting hands on a traumatized kid who has had some incident is likely to cause that kid to react violently.”*

Data and Information Management Systems

In General

- *“What’s the policy to break down data secrecy? What are the sharing mechanisms? Technical data sharing difficulties are real, but the National Information Exchange Model is a good response. “*
- *“Data systems must identify alternatives and their outcomes must be discussed. A good data system is important for many reasons. One is that parental opinions have hardened around the defense of their children. We need facts. “*
- *“We need a state agency to agree on uniform architecture for any data system and that agency must seek the ability to talk seamlessly among other stakeholders. “*
- *“We need to promulgate a common set of definitions such as POLARIS and that can be useful for all other systems. “*
- *“We need a criminal justice cabinet for information technology. “*
- *“Confidentiality is a bar to data sharing, but people hide behind it.”*
- *“A common data system should include photographs. “*
- *“Much work has been done on common data systems throughout Illinois but much more must be done. There are many state agencies that are currently spending millions of dollars on data upgrades without any meaningful discussion among them.”*
- *“The principle is ‘you must use the data that you collect’ and aggregated data must be continually reviewed. “*
- *“Unique identifiers are necessary because our biggest issue is the inability to track kids, therefore, you can’t draw conclusions. “*
- *“Early data sets are impossible to get because status offenders are not collected.”*
- *“Criminal history data is more reliable than UCR because it is used. “*
- *“JWatch approach is important because it’s appropriate to gain flexibility as needs and programs grow. JWatch can provide information that either affirms or refutes individual beliefs. That’s valuable to change perception of what works.”*
- *“Racial coding training is absolutely essential these days. “*
- *“Any data system must be based on outcomes including why outcomes were not reached.”*
- *“The IJIS (Illinois Justice Information System) is a great idea, but before we get there, we must streamline data systems. We need standardized intake pushed from there to all relevant players and*

local jurisdictions need to examine their own process. We must think small, clean it up, then interdependency and sharing is possible. “

- *“Judges need their own judicial portal to get into other systems. The other agencies can control the access, but it is needed to provide a context for good decision making. “*
- *“The method of acquiring data is immaterial. Accuracy and completeness is what is essential. “*
- *“There is a culture of ‘owned’ data which leads to a lack of sharing. We have to get over that. “*
- *“A central database available to various users is ideal but various systems must be able to speak to each other in order to determine that. “*
- *“Do we need a universal data system? Unquestionably.”*

Core Set of Data Elements for System Wide Collection and Analysis

- *“A common data set is important and important to be acquired from all the stakeholders in the system, especially for assessments. “*
- *“A more integrated data system is desirable but we need agreed upon outcome measures. Common data elements will emerge over time. “*
- *“Common data elements are desirable but it should be a very limited set. We could agree upon one page of common elements. It’s absolutely necessary to create a unique identifier across systems in order to be able to communicate.”*

The JWatch System

- *“Longitudinally-based education data should be compatible with other systems. It’s essential to have educational records available in juvenile justice. JWatch is a great idea and it should include a student identification number. “*
- *“JWatch is a great idea. Starting with probation we can start to develop a meaningful data system. “*
- *“Good intentions and conversations don’t make data integration happen. You must have people in the system that uses it to design it. JWatch is a model because it’s dependent upon user groups. There can be constant change so as not to collect useless information.”*
- *“JWatch is a very useful concept. It’s the same as ICASE. You have access if you contribute. “*

Resource Allocation and Realignment

- *“There certainly needs to be some changes in policy and in practice, but one of those changes needs to be that alternative approaches in many cases must be regional and include dollars for transportation. They’re all based on funding and there’s an interrelationship so losses to mental health funding have an effect on law enforcement and probation departments. “*

- *“The biggest positive change would be to expand Redeploy and remove the penalties from it.”*
- *“We have to have more attention to an adequate continuum of care and less reliance on acute and secure care.”*
- *“A useful shift would be to do what the Washington State Public Policy Institute does. It’s statutory; it’s required to report to the Legislature on cost and effectiveness as well as evaluation. It’s an independent body. We should have one. “*
- *“We need resources on the front end to identify co-morbid issues. Delinquent behavior should be seen as co-occurring with trauma, disease, maltreatment, etc. We must have assessments ever earlier before pathology becomes a crisis. “*
- *“The Mental Health Juvenile Justice Initiative proved itself. But it also identified transportation as a problem as well as a lack of professionals involved in parent engagement as well as standardized screening and assessment. That’s what we have to do in order to solve our major issues. “*
- *“Of course, we need better assessment, but that should lead to a set of criteria that must be met before there’s a commitment to DJJ. We need a decision tree. One positive change would be to charge for inappropriate admissions.”*
- *“We certainly need to continue to educate judges and legislators as to what works. Legislators are short-sighted about spending on things to keep people out of jail, especially as to caseworkers. Recent studies determine that they are very effective and in the long term the cost is much lower to society than incarceration. “*
- *“We have a gap in public education. The assumption is that incarceration is desirable and effective when we know better. We need a cost-benefit study. Needed policy changes to get to kids as young as possible. We need early recognition of at-risk kids and, therefore, we have to involve teachers. “*
- *“While we need an analysis of all funds and expenses, in other words, financial mapping of the juvenile justice system, the real answer that we all know is Redeploy. “*
- *“One change we need is for judges to refrain from issuing orders to the most expensive level of care whether that is inpatient substance abuse treatment, residential treatment for mental health or sexual abuse for months at a time. Those are not safe environments in the way that judges believe. In fact, they do more harm than good. Those decisions are made for expediency. It’s who they know, who they’ve had relationships with, and what we’ve always done. That needs to change.”*
- *“A needed change is a requirement that judges consider risk and needs from some sort of common assessment as they determine sentences. “*

Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention

- *“The Surgeon General says that special education is input into a child’s life approximately four years after the pattern starts to develop. We don’t engage youth. “*

- *“Gender relevant services are a missing link in Illinois.”*
- *“We need evidence-based practices and we need to tie funding to EBP. Resources will always be scarce unless programs are based on data and best practices. They’re going to lose dollars otherwise.”*
- *“If we’re going to change to evidence-based practices, we really have to give some lead time and that could be two or three years to convert our system to use only those practices with an evidence base. “*
- *“Frontal lobe development means mistakes are going to be made including driving and drinking and other status offenses and they’re often in place because kids are different.”*

Effective Reintegration of Confined Youth

- *“We could cut the Department of Juvenile Justice beds by two-thirds without risk to safety in Illinois, and the funding from those dollar shifts would be very beneficial. Parole from the Department of Juvenile Justice should be determined by an independent body — neither judges nor the department personnel. There are incentives to keep those kids in prison.”*
- *“A balance of risk and progress on individual treatment plans should be the criteria for release.”*
- *“Over time, resources must be committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice system, specifically for reentry and after care as well as for diversion. All of this ought to be community based. There should be incentives for communities to keep appropriate kids in their community. For those kids who are in DJJ, the length of stay ought to be the shortest time and that decision ought to be driven by risks and needs. “*
- *“The PRB is not the right approach. The model of step down in Department of Child and Family Services is decisions tied to a clinical process, what abilities a kid actually has. “*
- *“We must share performance data among communities. You know transitions are the highest risk times for kids and so we need a menu of services for transitions and that’s certainly reentry from DJJ but it’s also critical for many other changes in a kid’s life. “*

Disproportionate Minority Contact

- *“We need an administrative rule that requires the adequate collection of race and ethnicity data.”*
- *“I would hope that we actually get to uniform collection of race data, but we have to realize that there’s intrinsic value in the individual regardless of color. “*
- *“The will do better in collecting race data is there but the coordination is missing. We have lots of little projects rather than a commitment by the whole community, the whole state, to do a better job of collecting race data. “*

- *“We need to adopt a racial coding manual throughout our entire system, and organize our data systems around some common set of information including DMC data.”*
- *“Maybe surveys are needed to collect DMC data. A lot of what happens in the justice system is simply not recorded so maybe it requires a different approach.”*
- *“Early quality defense at the first police contact is one needed change as well as education of minority communities about their rights and the system. “*
- *“We ought to have services in communities so cops are a last resort and we should educate our kids about what to do when they’re stopped so as not to escalate a situation.”*
- *“To reduce DMC we need to look to other states and find out what strategies they are utilizing that are successful.”*
- *“We should all remember the whites are soon going to be the minority race in our country. We need to get hold of this.”*
- *“We have to look to science as a response to disproportionality. So we know that conduct disorders and violence are connected to crime and substance abuse. We also know that they are connected to poverty. One study suggests that when a casino was placed on an Indian reservation that the income went up and then crime and substance abuse went down strikingly. That has ramifications for every ethnic poor community.”*
- *“The lack of alternatives in individual communities leads to disproportionality.”*
- *“We really need an extraordinarily broad discussion around DMC. It’s a good topic for Juvenile Justice Councils because it goes into the individual community. Responses to DMC include the front door where we need to examine where kids are coming from and don’t use misdemeanors for entry into the system. We need to look at the community milieu and support what keeps them out. We also need to take a look at the back door and end parole at the age of 18 or use parole only for two years or perhaps two times the length served or whatever is less.”*
- *“Law is part of the culture that must change and we need an aggressive legislative agenda.”*
- *“If we’re going to reduce disproportionality, then neighborhoods must be addressed. There’s a disproportionate opportunity for crime in many neighborhoods and we have to deal with that. “*
- *“You know the representation in law enforcement should be reflective of the racial make-up of a community. “*
- *“Data mapping has certainly been effective in some communities and we need to look at the effects of some specific crime loss, drugs laws being primary.”*

- *“Prevention is really key and that means involving communities. We’ve seen progress in Latino communities and part of that is that community involvement, and that certainly can be done in African-American communities, too.”*
- *“One first step is that a Juvenile Justice Council ought to be given DMC data and a specific report to examine the trends and reasons in that local community.”*
- *“The reduction in disproportionality really requires a continuum of care, and that’s big. It means home-based supports which are culturally reflected, agency staff that are reflective of the race and ethnicity of clients, work force development with the idea that you need to grow your own workers and use paraprofessionals. We need child and family advocates for kids in court including community college courses on child care advocacy and the development of paraprofessionals. We really need to develop EPTSD.”*
- *“The Court is the only body which can make things work. We need to use our system in a way that requires all involved to know about disproportionality and to make decisions about it. DMC will reduce when we have a better public narrative about alternatives to incarceration.”*

Positive Youth Outcomes

- *“Positive outcomes” is an evolving concept but the principle is sound.”*
- *“The program side is still developing. It really means that we can’t just look at kids as offenders or victims. We have to look at the individual.”*
- *“The measurement of outcomes is important and not fixed but it has to include attitudes about school and rule breaking, positive social relationships, some ability at problem solving, and some real practice at how to make a good choice, how to discriminate among options.”*
- *“We really need to change the system to one that is individually based. We need to personalize justice.”*
- *“Looking to restorative justice is important in looking for positive outcomes. Building competency is what RJ is all about.”*
- *“Positive youth development means providing positive opportunities using kids’ strength. It also has to include employment.”*
- *“Edgar County’s Positive Youth Development effort provides some lessons. Many steps are already in place. First of all, it lowers the number of kids entering the system and gets to them as young as possible, namely Headstart and a continuum of positive programming.”*
- *“We can’t assume the kids know what is positive. You really have to teach right from wrong, and treating others and their property with respect, as well as how to address others, how to have some social interaction.”*

- *“We can’t have a positive youth development approach when we invest more resources in youth prisons than in youth services. Developing a positive outcome system maybe possible, but we have to realize that our systems are reactionary and that’s reactionary to bad behavior. “*
- *“One way to approach a system based on positive outcomes is to find great examples and expose them to the public through great messages. You know changing to positive outcomes as a standard is possible but it’s difficult to maintain. “*
- *“How” is really the problem. Different personalities among line officers will mean that there are different approaches, but remember that station adjustment and judicial diversions can be life-changing. “*
- *“This subject turns the whole conversation upside down and how do you measure and articulate the concept in a way to create this paradigm shift. We need to create a common list of things that would benefit a person, like a school job, a marital relationship, having a car. There’s a thousand things on that list, but then use those results in an individual’s life to look for things to key on to position a person for success.”*
- *“For probation officers to use evidence-based practices is a step along a continuum towards positive outcomes as the measure of our system. If an EBP assessment is followed, then positive youth development is what’s used. Seventy-two to seventy-four percent better results with mid-risk populations is what happens when using EBP. When you use risk as a tool, it is part of the progress towards a positive system.”*
- *“In order to move towards a PYD-based system, the cabinet must agree. Strengthening families is a good model, but there are many models and we really need to agree on one. Behavior coaches are good tools to use toward changing the system.”*