

Governor's Commission to Review and Advise on Services Related to At-Risk Youth in New Hampshire

November 13, 2015
Legislative Office Building
Rooms 206-208
Concord, NH

DRAFT MINUTES

Commission Members in Attendance: Mary Ann Cooney, Geoffrey Souther, Mary Steady, Michael Adamkowski, Michael Skibbie, Nicole Rodler, Evelyn Clark Smith, Martha Kane

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Nick Toumpas, David Dionne, Karen Purse, Judge James Carroll

Others in Attendance: Director Penny Sampson, SYSC; Administrator Gail Snow, DCYF; Public guest

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Commissioner Mary Ann Cooney at approximately 11:05 by welcoming members of the Commission and guests. She also requested a note taker for this particular meeting and Commissioner Rodler agreed to this request.

II. Approval of Minutes (October 9, 2015): Chair Commissioner Cooney motioned for the approval of minutes. Commissioner Skibbie requested a clarification of the Minutes in regards to his comments in section 7 under utilizing a correctional facility for lower level offenders. He noted that he stated that NH utilizes the SYSC correctional facility more than the national average; he stated also for clarification that we hang onto youth in the facility longer than the national average; and that the re-entry project he referenced in the 2000's occurred in Nashua, and he clarified that his stats were in relation to Nashua schools only. Conversation in regards to the clarification occurred.

Chair Cooney motioned for the approval of the Minutes with the clarification; Commissioner Souther seconded the motion and all were in favor except Commissioner Clark-Smith voted not-in-favor.

III. Review DRAFT Report to Governor: Chair Cooney acknowledged at the October meeting that all attending Commissioners agreed to adding input for the report, and to date she received two reports on feedback for the report. Commissioner Skibbie asked to develop some specific recommendations regarding the challenges for SYSC and the conversation led the Commission to discuss recommendations for the broader spectrum of juvenile justice, the full array of services from diversion to re-entry should be addressed. Commissioner Souther reminded the Commission that the task at hand is to recommend in January on what issues have been presented to the Commission and then later narrow the specific recommendations down to a few key areas of targeted improvements.

Chair Cooney reminded the Commission that we have received presentations to date on all points within the juvenile justice realm, so we can pull highlights from past Minutes as to what has been provided from presenters as to their areas of need. The Commission discussed RSA 91:A and the Right to Know Law, and questioned if we can provide a draft of suggestions and legally be allowed to discuss it through

email w/o revisions then provide it for public view and discussion at later date which would be similar to a sub-committee process. Follow up would be obtained.

Chair Cooney requested that the Commission work with the time at hand and list the preliminary issues we have heard and then provide our top **4 recommendations**.

1.) Recommendation: The State should look at the actual cost per youth at SYSC -without costs for other buildings or services on the River Road campus and other expenses incurred- to develop the budget according to that cost.

SYSC budget issue was presented to the Commission and key points provided by Director Bartlett were as follows:

a. Gaps:

Access to Mental Health Treatment
Substance use/ abuse treatment
Mental Health inpatient/outpatient support groups
Trauma informed care
Transitional supports
Permanent adult connections
Housing

b. Challenges:

increasing younger youth
increasing violent gang activity
drug involved families
lack of pro-social activities
plans for SYSC

The Commission discussed at length what to develop for a recommendation in regards to the current budget crisis at SYSC and Commissioner Souther reminded the group that we sent forward a letter to the Governor on our position regarding the budget crisis and recommendations for current plans.

Commissioner Adamkowski inquired again about the difference between the cost of youth at SYSC and the cost of the entire campus, and how this could be looked at similarly to the rate we charge for youth by other states? Director Sampson clarified for the Commission that the rate is measured to be \$499/day/child which includes educational cost, food and shelter as that is what DOE measures for cost under national measures with a population of 50 youth.

Further inquiry made of Commissioner Kane, who was asked to clarify about the difference in cost for a coded youth vs. non-coded; her response was that the Staffing is provided for a percentage of youth automatically. After further discussion the Commission decided that the first recommendation will be:

2) Recommendation: to develop youth assessment tools to identify appropriate services along the spectrum.

Commissioner Souther then directed the conversation to what else is needed in the array of services? He stated that diversion programs are lacking and this is the first point of entry, which should be addressed, but what else along the services? Commissioner Skibbie reminded the Commission of the assessment report that Ned Loughran presented in regards to the appropriate level for services in juvenile justice. When looking at youth that need confinement, diversion is not a solution, but other models exist. The Commission needs to think of least intrusive to the most intrusive of services. Commissioner Clark-Smith shared that in past years there was a "gate-keeper" that ensured that all youth were accessing the system in this model, so they could not be confined until they exhausted other resources. Commissioner Adamkowski shared that 30 youth currently are receiving out-of-state services, so what is missing in NH that we can get these youth back? Commissioner Kane emphasized that the

assessment tools are lacking as well, so placement is a challenge for the probation level when they need to utilize these tools.

3) Recommendation: There should be a commitment to an array of youth services that are monitored, assessed and altered as needed over time.

Commissioner Adamkowski and Skibbie discussed the gaps in services and the continuous need to assess and change services over time.

Commission then discussed the array of services that are in existence, and the current miscommunication between systems. Commissioner Kane emphasized that there needs to be a greater control over sanctions on juveniles in a timely manner as to maintain safety for the community and youth, starting with Law Enforcement actively enforcing detainment for safety sake while conversations occur rather than allowing a youth to remain in the community at-risk. The Commission discussed at length the spectrum of services and how all this plays into SYSC's overall purpose and possibilities that can be implemented into the array of services offered under SYSC: discussion around substance treatment under an inpatient/outpatient model; a transitional framework based on step-down model; or even a psychiatric residential treatment facility combined with a detained/committed facility. The Commission requested any other plans that are actively being investigated for the current space be shared with the group.

Commissioner Steady then inquired how all of this works into existing conversations on the state level such as the Behavioral Health Collaborative and the System of Care under DHHS? Commissioner Adamkowski reminded the group that through adopting the children's system of care, there were reductions in demand in the juvenile justice coordination of care- the Commission recommends that the State look at a System of Care model, including the CHINS process.

4) Recommendation: that a study of the base rate of recidivism be conducted for SYSC and analysis for reasons for the high rate, as well as how to decrease recidivism.

Commissioner Skibbie then addressed the final component in the juvenile justice realm of recidivism, and that SYSC feels to have a higher rate of recidivism than any other place in the country. There has not been a presentation on current data around recidivism, aside from Ned Loughran's report that the length of stay does not correlate to recidivism- the data found if a youth is confined beyond 6 month window they tend to have higher recidivism rates.

IV. Public Comment: Administrator Snow provided some documentation for the Commission in regards to the statistics provided by OJJDP in regards to residential placement.

Director Sampson presented data in regards to the length of stay of youth at SYSC, the national average length of stay is 252 days and NH has been below that for the past 4 years, at 6mos.

Director Sampson emphasized that there is an increase in 17 year olds since July to 38 with 50 youth currently at SYSC.

Commissioner Skibbie asked for the data that Director Sampson was referring to, with questions about conflicting data that has been presented in the past?

Administrator Snow offered to send the graph to the Commission for review of the referred data. Conversation in regards to accurate and thorough reporting was requested so the Commission had the full perspective.

V. Adjournment: Chair Commissioner Cooney moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and adopted, meeting adjourned at 1:05PM.

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