

The Council is grounded in prevention and works to ensure justice by building equitable and effective opportunities for children, youth and families to thrive in Vermont.

Council for Equitable Youth Justice
a.k.a. Children and Families Council for Prevention Programs
Meeting Notes June 15th, 2023, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

In-Person at the Waterbury State Office Complex Cherry A 24 RmA209 or virtual via zoom

Members in attendance: Karen Vastine, Donn Hutchins, Kreig Pinkham, Matt Wolf, Mike Loner, Mackenzie Mazza, Julia Brand, Kirsten Kersey, Katherine O’Day, Stuart Berry (joined at 11), Laurey Burris, Sparks, Linda Johnson,
Members Missing: Christopher Lukasik, Mercedes Avila, Amy Davenport
Partners Present: Elizabeth Morris, Jessica Barquist, Addie Lentzner, Taylor Welch

Introductions & Updates: Two members of the public have joined today, Taylor Welch, who works at the Bristol Hub, a Teen center & skatepark. Addie Lentzner is a student at Middlebury College and is a member of the Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network.

Hold July 20th meeting date tentatively. We may or may not cancel depending on the need for a vote. Most likely will have a shorter meeting even if we do have to meet.

Motion to approval May Meeting Notes. Seconded. Matt abstains. Unanimously passes.

DC Update

Council members who attended visited with both staff of Senator Welch and staff of Representative Balint. Senator Welch’s staff were interested and asked good questions, but members did not have as successful a meeting with Rep. Balint’s staff. However, they were able to meet Rep. Balint in person briefly.

Donn shared two workshops he had particular interest in:

NH Presumption of Diversion. In NH, work was done between 2016-2020 and involved substantially changing the juvenile justice System in NH. Prior to these changes, the NH JJ system was detaining too many kids; a full set of stakeholders supported the changes to process, policy, statute etc. this was a broad-based change touching all parts of the Juvenile Justice system. Youth was redefined in this process as through age 18 years old (previously was 17). NH moved all youth cases to diversion/evaluation/testing before a court case is filed. Note in NH the initial case proceedings are filed by law enforcement, not the State’s Attorney. Both the State’s Attorney and defense attorneys come into the system after the initial court hearing which the police are responsible for. A youth evaluation is now required by law before you can go to court (including Big 12 offenses). The new system evaluations have a heavy emphasis on mental health issues; NH invested in its youth mental health system as a result and still has more to do. Over 95% of the cases in the first year had tests. Much higher numbers of youth were diverted without a court record.

Raising the minimum age of incarceration for youth to 14. Would be an interesting conversation to have for what it looks like in VT.

Legislative Updates

Update on S.4 delayed until next meeting as both Amy and Christopher are not present.

H.175 has been passed along to the Governor’s office as of June 13th – he has 5 days to vote on the bill. We are not anticipating a veto. The bill goes into effect on July 1st, 2023, if he votes yes.

By-Laws

At the February meeting, the Council voted to update the membership section of the by-laws and remove any mention of the Children’s Trust Fund. Because of this, an updated version of the by-laws needs to be posted on the Council’s

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public facing website ASAP. Given H.175, we would like to also update the by-laws to reflect those statutory changes. Please note: There are many other sections of the by-laws that need to be completely re-written. This includes but is not limited to, committee structure, elections, conflict of interest, and more. The Governance Committee will continue to work on these updates.

Motion: If the Governor signs H.175, the by-laws will be updated to reflect the statutory changes as of the date H.175 becomes law (July 1, 2023). Seconded. Passed. Unanimous.

The updated version of the by-laws will be posted on the website when the law goes into effect.

Racial Equity Consultant

Each Committee should identify one representative for scoring purposes, please have this conversation at your next committee meeting!

Committee Report Outs (Systems Improvement did not meet in June)

ERD Committee: Discussed and finalized two goals and had a presentation from Judge Davenport on the court filing system for race and what that looks like – there are a large amount of youth who do not have a race recorded in the court's records. The VT supreme court may require that race information is included in filings.

Youth Services: Worked on their upcoming conference during the last meeting. Katherine has been working with the state's GIS team to re-vitalize the map.

Summer Retreat to be held at Allis State Park in Randolph on August 9th. It will be a potluck so start thinking about what to bring!

Remember to fill out the meeting feedback survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3LCJ6QX>