

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

April 20, 2023: Meeting Notes

Members Present: Karen Vastine, Mike Loner, Kreig Pinkham, Laurey Burris, Amy Davenport, Kirsten Kersey, Sparks, Stu Berry, Linda Johnson, Mackenzie Mazza, Katherine O'Day, Matt Wolf, Christopher Lukasik, Julia Brand

Members Missing: Mercedes Avila, Donn Hutchins

Partners Present: Tyler Allen, Lindy Boudreau

Guests: Jessica Barquist

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:33 am

Updates from the Chair:

- H. 175: Karen and Amy testified on H. 175 in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Committee voted unanimously to report the bill favorably to the full Senate with no amendments from the House version. Karen and Amy commented that this it is highly unusual for a committee not to change some wording in a bill sent over from the other body.
- Elections of 2023/24 Council officers will take place at the Council's May meeting.

Approval of March Minutes: The minutes from the Council's March meeting were unanimously approved.

Committee Report Outs:

Youth Services Committee: (Katherine)

- **Drop-In Center:** Committee is waiting to hear back from DCF regarding the reporting requirements for the RFP.
- **Conference:** Committee is working on planning a conference on delinquency prevention for school-aged youth.

Governance Committee: (Karen)

- The Governance Committee is working on an orientation packet for new members and the election process for Committee chairs. The Committee may have something for the Council to vote on at the May meeting.

ERD Committee: (Sparks)

- **Goals:** ERD Committee is finalizing its goals using the SMART goal process. Still working on the last goal related to data.

- **RFP for Consultant:** Committee continues to work on an RFP for Anti White Supremacy and Racial Equity work that will involve the entire Council.
- **School Suspension Project:** Recent report indicates that the project is doing well but there are opportunities to improve.

System Improvement Committee: (See below)

Report on Officer Election Slate: (Kreig Pinkam)

Election Process: Kreig described the process for securing nominations for officer elections in May. An email was sent out to all Council members requesting nomination along with a subsequent reminder email. All nominations were confirmed by email. Based on the nominations, the uncontested slate is as follows:

Chair: Karen Vastine

Vice-Chair: Amy Davenport

Secretary/Treasurer: Donn Hutchins

The slate has been duly warned for the election of officers in May.

The candidates shared some thoughts regarding their vision for the Council and their future plans. Karen stated that her goal was to grow leadership capacity on the Council. She is happy to serve as Chair and proud of our accomplishments this year, particularly: H. 175 legislation, our response to the DCF report on residential capacity, progress on governance issues and increased visibility. She will be happy to put her name in for another year. She noted the importance of having Kreig’s input as a Chair Emeritus. Amy noted that this would be her last year as vice-chair.

Updates from CJJ

- CJJ will offer scholarships to youth members who want to go to the Youth Justice Summit. Karen will follow up with our youth members.

System Improvement Committee: (Christopher Lukasik)

- **Future Direction:** SI Committee will be looking at alternative dispositions to a BARJ or Diversion referral for youth charged with offenses that would have resulted in a “fine only” if filed in adult court.
- **S. 4 as passed by Senate:**
Christopher led the Council through a discussion of the provisions of S.4 as it passed the Senate with an eye towards developing the Council’s position on the legislation when it is taken up by the House Judiciary Committee (See document sent to the Council prior to the meeting entitled S.4 Update). A robust discussion resulted in unanimous **votes** for the following positions:
 - The Council opposes the addition of any misdemeanor offenses in the list of Big 12 crimes including violation of conditions of release imposed by the Criminal Division.

- The Council opposes the provision in S.4 that delays full implementation of raise the age until July 1, 2024. The Council recommends a shorter delay of either 6 or 9 months.
- The Council supports the creation of a community grant program to fund violence prevention programming for municipalities and nonprofits administered by the Department of Health. The Council recommends the addition of the Council as an entity with which DOH must consult.
- The Council supports the provision to streamline the process for Motions to Transfer to Adult Court and Motions for YO status to be head by the Family Court and eliminate the “ping pong” effect of the case moving back and forth unnecessarily between the two courts. The Council however opposes the requirement that this can only occur based on a stipulation by both parties.
- The Council will send a letter to the Sentencing Commission outlining its position with respect to the inclusion of misdemeanors as Big 12 offenses.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 12:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Davenport, Vice-Chair