



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Commission on Juvenile Justice

Marc Elrich
County Executive

James C. Bridgers, Jr. Ph.D., MBA
Director

Commission on Juvenile Justice Meeting

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

**Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

CITIZEN MEMBERS PRESENT: Kimberly Alfriend, Carol Cichowski, Gerda Gallop-Green, Melissa Goemann, Andrew Messick, Elizabeth Pentecost, and Erin Whaley

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT: Joanna Bonner, Francha Davis, Elizabeth Emen, Susan Farag, Kathy Estrada, Shakirra Haynes, Brett Lonker, Steve Neff, Nathaniel Tipton, and Carlotta Woodward.

ABSENT MEMBERS: Bonnie Beavers, Scott Joftus, Michael Pinard, Jonathan Scriven, and Heather Sweren

EMERITUS MEMBERS: Carole Brown.

GUESTS: Diana Olsen

SPEAKERS: Honorable Karla N. Smith - Associate Judge, Montgomery County Circuit Court, Honorable Kathleen M. Dumais, Associate Judge, Montgomery County Circuit Court, and Lena Kim, Family Magistrate, Montgomery County Circuit Court.

STAFF LIAISON PRESENT: Diane Lininger

I. Welcome – The meeting was opened by Carlotta Woodward, Co-Chair of the Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice (CJJ). Carlotta introduced our speakers for this meeting, Honorable Karla N. Smith - Associate Judge, Montgomery County Circuit Court, Honorable Kathleen M. Dumais, Associate Judge, Montgomery County Circuit Court, and Lena Kim, Family Magistrate, Montgomery County Circuit Court. Topics were written up by several members of the Commission on Juvenile Justice

1. Resources

- a. How do the Judges feel about the closure of Noyes and lack of Group homes
 - b. Services for LGBTQ kids involved in the Justice system, considerations/decisions that are made for them
 - c. Diversion programs
- Answers from the Judges:
- A. The panel had strong feelings that what was promised was not delivered for Montgomery County youth. Without a detention facility within the county, all girls are sent to WMCC (in Hagerstown), and boys are sent to Prince George's County or Baltimore. Overcrowding leads

Local Behavioral Health Authority ○ Behavioral Health and Crisis Services

to more assaults. Girls, specifically, need better social services/therapy. Because detained girls have a smaller population, they are harder to serve and not getting the services they need. The detention facility for them is the same facility for their placement. Juveniles are not getting adequate mental health nor substance abuse treatment.

B. No, DJS not equipped for this.

C. There are not court diversion programs, the last one was teen court, which no longer exists.

Carlotta spoke to expected programs, ex. Auto theft diversion and pre-DJS diversion

Judge Dumais noted connecting truancy to other issues

2. Services are available to the youth

- a. Are there waiting times?
- b. What services work
- c. What services are lacking?

Answers from the Judges –

Yes, there are waiting times. Examples include Identity is understaffed, and Clinical Solutions had an issue with whether insurance would cover treatment. When the programs work, they provide good services but there are obstacles to that happening efficiently.

CTO was considered a good program. Also, S.O.N., but it is only targeted at certain areas/youth. YAP also has long waitlists. Overall, the feeling was that DJS needs to send more referrals. DJS only contracts with certain programs, it limits the resources that are available.

Judge Smith noted that the court's social work intern problem has helped with getting kids needed resources.

Magistrate Kim spoke about the pending placement units, which are new, but only helpful for kids going to in-state behavior modification placements. Otherwise, no credit is given to their time on the unit.

Finally, there is a new GED graduation program that just completed its 2nd year to congratulate kids who get their GEDs while under the court's jurisdiction.

3. Trends in the court room

- a. Ages
- b. Crimes
- c. Substance- use related
- d. Substances that are you seeing an uptick in usage.
- e. Trends of youth coming through the system that could have been (easily) avoided
- f. School related incidents

Answers from the Judges -

Judges were surprised by how young some respondents are. Also, about the amount of car thefts and guns, but agreed they are seeing less fentanyl cases. They found that Mountain Manor as an option was helpful. In terms of school, they addressed the truancy issue and how that can lead to more school related incidents but noted that the MCPS liaison has been able to help in cases.

4. Training

- a. Are there any identified areas of training that the Judges believe they need related to children and/or any aspects of the cases involving children?

b. Have judges identified any knowledge gaps?

Answers from the Judges -

Judge Dumais spoke about the Judicial College and the training they have there. Also noted were the bench bar meetings that are held monthly and how speakers come to those to discuss various programs.

Additionally, Liz Emen spoke re: FIS/CABHS programs that are available, but they only have 2 therapists and no Spanish speakers. Additionally, in the current political times, programming is at risk.

5. Opinions on Restorative Approaches

Answers from the Judges -

Unfortunately, by the time cases come to court there is not much the court can do because they are not equipped to deal with it at that level. But victim impact statements read in court can be meaning in cases. They agree with the modeling; it is just hard to do at the court level.

6. Children in Need of Supervision Petitions

- a. Are cases being brought in?
- b. How much has this increased
- c. What are the types of cases you are seeing.

Answers from the Judges -

Only Magistrate Kim had had a single case, and jurisdiction was not found. The SAO is not involved in those cases, and DJS did not have counsel.

7. Overall impression of the system

- a. What is working in the system
- b. What is not working in the system

Answers from the Judges -

Overall, services are not working. Not just DJS, but not enough services exist. The bench noted that services before court involvement are important. We need a multisystemic system, and getting involved earlier.

Also noted, was the new GPS violation policy which DJS implemented, and the court finds to be problematic.

YouthBuild program in the county has been successful – had 14 graduates this session.

8. The Judges shared individual success stories

9. Other things the Judges shared

- Judge Smith thinks there needs to be a DHHS liaison for the court (as MCPS already has one)
- There is a lack of Spanish speaking therapists (Just Identity program and they are short-staffed)

II. Old Business

- a. Meeting Minutes – May 2025 minutes were voted and finalized.

III. New Business

- a. Nomination committee – Francha Davis and Joanna Bonner will be on the nomination committee. Diane sent out an email explaining the executive committee's position and asking

for nominations. Will be nominating the executive committee at the beginning of the July meeting. Please consider being on the executive committee. We will need Commissioners to volunteer to head up the legislative committee. Carol Cichowski and Bonnie Beavers are no longer on the commission.

- b. Vacancy notice – Diane emailed out – please forward to anyone you think might be interested. Vacancy notice ends July 2.
- c. Annual work-plan – Commission voted to approve the Annual work-plan.

IV. Upcoming Meetings

- a. July Meeting – Kayma Freeman who is the Coordinator of the Local Care Team for the Collaboration Council on Children Youth and Families will be speaking about her program.
- b. August Meeting – The Commission on Juvenile Justice does not meet in August.

V. Announcements from Members – Carlotta updated about the change in MD Secretary and the Governor's Commission. Diane updated about the executive committee vacancies.

VI. Meeting Adjourned