



**JUVENILE JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL
WORKGROUP
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 20, 2021
11:30 a.m.
Zoom**

Members in Attendance:

Benton, Holly, Probation Department
Bertrand, Ethan, 2nd District Representative
Krueger, Amy, Department of Social Services
Linver, Sol, Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office (SBSO)
Nicola, Mag, District Attorney's Office
Villegas, Lea, Public Defender's Office
Wales, Alison, Rape Crisis Center

Members Absent/Unrepresented:

Burns, Shana, Department of Behavioral Wellness (BW)
Garcia, Adolfo, Child Abuse Listening Mediation (CALM)
Wageneck, Frann, Santa Barbara Unified School District

Guests Present:

Baldwin, Greg, Pioneer Valley High School
Collier, Paul, Santa Maria Joint Union High School District (SMJUHD)
Grossi, Dana, Probation Department
Milligan, Karyn, Probation Department
Small, Shawn, Probation Department
Trevino, Corina, District Attorney's Office
Winckler, John, BW

The meeting was called to order at 11:33 a.m. and attendees provided self-introduction.

**1. Roll Call of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Workgroup (JJCC Workgroup)
Members**

Present

Holly Benton
Ethan, Bertrand
Amy Krueger
Sol Linver
Mag Nicola
Lea Villegas
Alison Wales

Absent

Shana Burns
Adolfo Garcia
Frann Wageneck

2. Public Comment

- None

3. Approval of Minutes – All

- A motion was made by Mag Nicola and seconded by Alison Wales to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2021, Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Workgroup (JJCCWG) meeting.
 - A roll call vote was taken of the JJCCWG members present.
Ayes: 7
(Ethan Bertrand, Sol Linver, Mag Nicola, Holly Benton, Lea Villegas, Amy Krueger, Alison Wales)
Nays: 0
Abstentions: 0

4. JJCC Workgroup Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 Meeting Calendar – DCPO Holly Benton

- DCPO Benton reviewed the FY 2021-22 meeting calendar.
- A motion was made by Mag Nicola and seconded by Ethan Bertrand to approve the FY 2021-22 meeting calendar.
 - A roll call vote was taken of the JJCCWG members present.
Ayes: 7
(Ethan Bertrand, Sol Linver, Mag Nicola, Holly Benton, Lea Villegas, Amy Krueger, Alison Wales)
Nays: 0
Abstentions: 0

5. Santa Maria Joint Union High School District (SMJUHS) Truancy – Greg Baldwin, Dr. Paul Collier, Corina Trevino

- DCPO Benton welcomed the presenters to the JJCC WG meeting. Probation agrees that it is extremely important for youth to attend school and truancy is an indicator that something is not right with the youth and the family. Research indicates that formal system involvement is not beneficial and in response to the research, State legislation was passed. Assembly Bill (AB) 901 prevents Probation from case managing youth that are not under court supervision. The intent of the legislature is to divert truancy and other status offenses away from arrest or court involvement and for truancy to be addressed in the community.
- PowerPoint presentations were provided to the voting members regarding SMJUHS truancy concerns. The School Attendance Review Board (SARB) has several students that have been through the SARB process multiple years. Mr. Baldwin advised he is bringing the information forward to try and find ways to assist with better school attendance for these students.
- Dr. Collier explained the steps in the SARB process are first a letter sent home. If the student is still is not attending school, a meeting is scheduled with Dr. Collier, the student and their parents. At that meeting attendance is reviewed and discussed to determine if there is assistance that can be provided for the student to attend school and participants sign a contract committing to school attendance. For Seventy-five percent of student/parents, meeting attendance improves after the meeting, but for the remaining twenty-five percent they are sent to the official SARB panel.
- DCPO Benton asked where in the process are the conversations with the students and families regarding the root causes and identifying issues preventing students from attending school, such as the need to babysit younger siblings, working for the family, falling behind on school work and feeling they can't catch up, language barriers, etc. Dr. Collier advised those discussions are happening early on with counselors, teachers, and at the attendance meetings to troubleshoot issues the family may be having and work towards solutions.
- Greg Baldwin advised with COVID changes, students can ride the bus for free, an Assistant Principal picks up eight students that do not have access to a bus, there are evening classes, there are substitute teachers assigned to each grade available in the library for additional support, case managers make contact at home for those with Individual

Education Plans (IEPs), there are classes co-taught by a Special Ed teacher and general education teacher, the community based liaison does outreach, the Counselors reach out, internet is provided, and the Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley staff does outreach. SMJUHD is asking for help for those twenty-five percent of youth that the schools are unable to reach. Mr. Baldwin stated that his interpretation of AB901 indicates that the Probation Department and District Attorney should work together.

- Corina Trevino from the District Attorney's Office advised that she participates in three of the four steps in the SARB. As an outside entity she is able to open the conversation with the family to get creative and that is why she would like Probation at the table to offer a different perspective. When the Probation Officers were involved several years ago it was very helpful, as they know the family and are able to redirect the students.
- DCPO Benton shared youth and family participation in any services while not on Probation is voluntary, and behaviors will not be criminalized for not attending school. Probation's role is not to enforce attendance requirements, it is to refer to services. Probation's position is that Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are better positioned to provide direct services to these families; they are the same services and programs Probation would refer those students to. CBOs can provide them directly, without Probation providing referrals.
- Alison Wales stated that historically when the Lompoc Resource Officer or a Probation Officer attended the Lompoc School District SARB it was different than it is now, without those resources hands are tied on how to serve the students and families.
- Ethan Bertrand appreciated the presentation and discussion about truancy. With the shift in the juvenile justice system he understands Probation's position and the need for additional resources outside of law enforcement interventions.
- Mag Nicola stated the presence of a Probation Officer at SARB hearings opened more discussion regardless of it being required. It is being asked to return a Probation Officer to those hearings to present a more unified approach and a more well-rounded conversation. The request is not for informal or formal Probation for these students.
- Amy Krueger stated there were concerns about the push for intervention by Child Welfare and it is not their role to remove youth from their homes absent protective issues. It is a big resource issue for Child Welfare as the role in the SARB does not feel vital to those staff that participate. Corina Trevino advised that Child Welfare only needs to attend specific SARB hearings where there is history or suspected child abuse.
- DCPO Benton stated she and does not see a role for Probation in the SARB process that cannot be fulfilled by direct service providers. Many changes have been made, to ensure Probation is not prematurely involved with youth, and only intervene when necessary and required. There has not been a necessary role expressed today; there was a role historically when youth were placed on probation for truancy, but the results were not better outcomes for the youth. Probation Officers do know the families in some cases, but our expertise would be better used to assist and organize services in the community. Probation's presence alone sends a signal that may not be productive. Students will not be moved into a higher level of involvement in the juvenile justice system if they do not comply. The door is open to partnership, to assist in creating programs in partnership with the district attorney as the legislation outlines, and work with community-based organizations to address truancy-related issues, because Probation agrees this is an important issue.
- Greg Baldwin advised Probation being involved does change the perspective. The question is what do schools do for those two families that do not show up to meetings. AB 901 indicates Probation shall be involved if all other resources are exhausted. There are underlying issues but if the parents and youth don't come to the table the schools can't assist.
- DCPO Benton advised the reason Probation's involvement is mentioned throughout AB901 is we are often and historically the agency of all things to all people and the doorway to referrals to services, but doesn't mean Probation will be directly involved in every situation.

- Ethan Bertrand stated his concern would be that Probation providing support to the SARB would push youth into the justice system. Probation Officers should not be used as a threat, the intention is to support the youth but more Law Enforcement presence could have the opposite effect.
- Corina Trevino stated historically Probation Officers have assisted with getting student to mental health counseling appointments.
- Sol Linver stated Law Enforcement should not always be looked at as the enforcer, the school resource officers assist youth in a variety of different ways.
- DCPO Benton stated the JJCC WG needs to discuss the truancy issues, resources and agency participation further at its next meeting in order to make recommendations to the JJCC. It is anticipated the presenters will be invited to the August 13th JJCC meeting, to follow up on this issue with a more robust discussion. DCPO Benton thanked the presenters for advocating for the most difficult kids to reach.

6. Public Comment

- None

7. Chair Comments – Holly Benton

- This was DCPO Benton's last meeting chairing the JJCC WG as she is moving to oversight of the Adult Division. DCPO Shawn Small will be transitioning to the Juvenile Division and chairing the workgroup.
- DCPO Benton thanked the workgroup members for their participation and input to the Juvenile Division's changes over the last several years.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Professional Melanie Davis