

Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards

Monday, April 4, 2022 at 4:30 pm

Taskforce Members In-Person

Marquetta Atkins
Holly Osborne
Jazmine Rogers
Valerie Leon
Rhonda Lewis
Monique Garcia
Debbie Kennedy
Steve House
Tracey Mason, Sr.
Yeni Telles
Larry Burks
Taben Azad
Pastor C. Kirkendoll
Naquela Pack
Lilliana Rivera

Taskforce Members via Zoom

Mike Fonkert
Nina Shaw-Woody
Annmarie Arensberg
April Terry

Resource Members

- James Johnson – Via Zoom
- Steven Stonehouse
- Paul Duff
- Shantel Westbrook

Purpose of the Task Force: To review and recommend preferred system improvements after the incident and death of Cedric Lofton

Goal of the Task Force: Develop recommendations for improvements and changes to the existing system standards and performance of Department of Children and Families (DCF), law enforcement, and youth corrections programs

Today: Prioritize recommendations for Foster Care and Mental Health Systems; Review recommendations for WPD and JIAC

1. Prioritize recommendations for Foster Care and Mental Health

- A list of recommendations was developed from prior Taskforce conversations
- Each Taskforce member was tasked with selecting their top 5 priorities from these recommendations. These priorities will be public record
- The recommendations not selected will stay and continue to be tracked

2. Taskforce Recommendation Discussion – WPD

- The Taskforce reviewed Wichita Police Department recommendations
- Recommendation #1: An eco-system that connects community resources, grassroots organizations, advocates, coaches, champions and others with DCF, Law Enforcement, COMCARE, JIAC and JDF and other systems that serve foster care children in a mental health crisis
 - Pack discussed clarity on eco-system and infrastructure. The Taskforce could be more specific when naming the eco-system and infrastructure
 - Rogers mentioned a centralized database for this information
 - Mason discussed tying training to this information
 - Language around training and an accessible transparent database will be added to the recommendation
 - Pack wondered if there is a short term option to create a report of some sort while the eco-system and infrastructure is being created
 - Telles asked for WPD's opinion
 - Duff responded that WPD would support any kind of comprehensive system that improves communication and bridge building. There are 40 community police officers whose job is to make community and organization outreach. A database could be used to expand community outreach
- Recommendation #2: The Wichita Police Department continually engages with cultural events in neighborhoods throughout the community, particularly those with people of color in order to improve trust between communities of color and law enforcement
 - Mason stated that officers should continue community engagement outside of their uniform
 - Atkins mentioned that officers in full regalia can intimidate members of the community. Engagement is more than just going to events, but having real conversations with communities to strip down stereotypes
 - Burks said the recommendation should also include being a part of regularly scheduled meetings. They should be involved in more than just social gatherings
 - Garcia mentioned that removing language barriers can help the police to continually engage the community
 - Rogers discussed that language around continually engaging with events that center around marginalized groups could be added
 - Officer Duff mentioned that WPD is always looking to engage everyone in the community. Reach out to them with areas they can improve and invite them to community events. Community policing officers would love to be involved in scheduled meetings

- Recommendation #3: Supporting the outside review of the culture in the Wichita Police Department to determine the impact of recent reports of racist activities, as well as if/when it is acceptable to speak up if there is a difference of opinion between front-line officers and supervisors
 - Garcia asked about the third-party entity
 - A third-party review has already started regarding the WPD text messages
 - Recommendation #3 could be made specifically about language during the incident and recommendation #4 could be more broad to support a continued review of culture
 - Pack and Lewis said the recommendation needed more clarity
 - Language will be added for clarity on what the outcome for this recommendation would be
 - Kennedy stated there also needs to be a review of what the police are doing well
 - Telles discussed having an accessible and easy reporting process for those who have faced discrimination from officers
 - Atkins stated there are good police officers, but the purpose of the Taskforce is to review what is wrong and what policy changes can happen
 - Anderson asked who the group reviewing the text messages is
 - The city's Citizen Review Board is reviewing the incident and the City of Wichita is hiring the third-party outside entity to review WPD culture
- Recommendation #4: Based on findings from the review, we would support changes that rebuild the culture to be more diverse, equitable and inclusive
 - Pack mentioned having psychologists or psychiatrists on staff for WPD
 - Mason stated the recommendations should be combined together. They are too narrow and need to be tweaked to address the core of the issue
 - Recommendations #3 and #4 will be rewritten for more clarity
- Recommendation #5: Changes in Axon policies that require cameras continue to operate while law enforcement officers are working juvenile cases, including while during paperwork is complete
 - Telles stated that language should be added for a review of footage
 - Rogers mentioned this recommendation is important as there was an hour of footage not recorded during the night of CJ's incident
 - Recommended adding language about randomized checks of footage for training purposes
- Recommendation #6: Including a WPD representative on the local Crossover Youth Practice program

- This may already be in place. If so, the recommendation can be removed

3. Taskforce Recommendation Discussion – JIAC

- The Taskforce reviewed JIAC recommendations
- Recommendation #1: A change to SB 367, to allow for mental health to be a core service for the Department of Corrections, so it is not dependent on grant funds
 - Rogers asked if an amendment to SB 367 would be necessary for this to happen
 - Stonehouse responds that 367 would not have to be amended. It would have to be included as a condition of a grant
- Recommendation #2: Strengthening the statewide Crossover Youth Practice model for children with involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to reduce youth placed in out-of-home care, reduce the use of congregate care, reduce the disproportionate representation of children of color, and reduce the number of youth crossing over and becoming dually involved
 - Telles stated the recommendation needs clarity on what “strengthening” means
 - Pack asked for information on overrides
 - Stonehouse responds that overriding up is more common than overriding down
 - Stonehouse stated that the term “strengthening” could mean that other counties come onboard to where Sedgwick County is. The Crossover Youth Practice model is already being funded, it is just a matter of local protocols being written for each place. Expand would be a good word to add
 - Pack discussed a database of programs
 - Kennedy discussed the Family First Act. Children in foster care should only be in congregate care for two weeks
 - Rogers and Pack discussed the County hosting a database for youth programs while WPD could host a database for community outreach
 - Duff responded that WPD could list every organization, group, and community entity they are working with. This can be expanded into a database to include mental health and other community outreach programs
 - Telles asked about tying it into IRIS
 - IRIS is a database that allows multiple organizations to share information in one system
 - A database could consist of a list of people. Organizations who can be called upon need identified

- Language will be enhanced to strengthen and expand. Strive for parity in programs. There can be a tiered approach to creating a database
- Recommendation #3: Requiring an MOU between the Wichita Police Department and JIAC that honors the 2016 US Attorney General Opinion, and clearly outlines expectations for youth brought to the facility, transfers, arrest reports, officer release form etc.
 - Duff stated he spoke with the WPD law department and an MOU is in the works with both entities
 - There will be a follow up on the stage of the MOU and the Taskforce seeing it
 - Lewis stated that it was confusing how WPD acted during CJ's incident because he was taken to JIAC rather than St. Joe
 - Rogers discussed KSA 59-5923. It mentions how someone in a mental health crisis cannot be left in the custody of a non-medical facility
 - Pack mentioned that mental health calls need to be recorded.
 - Mason claimed that mental health calls should never escalate.
 - Atkins asked how can it be addressed in policy that there is an expectation that people will resist and how can we create language that prevents escalation
 - Osborne stated that JIAC would not have been in the picture if Cedric had gone to St. Joe
 - Lewis mentioned how there is no MOU between WPD and St. Joe. One will need to be created.
 - An MOU would not hurt, but as they are a private entity it would not rise to the top in terms of policy. They are required by federal law to treat everyone who presents in the ER
 - Rogers stated that language should be elevated that if someone presents with a mental health crisis to WPD they should be taken to the hospital
 - Lewis explained that we need to make mental health part of the culture. There continues to be a stigma around mental health

4. Next Steps and Adjourn

- Language will be worked on for the recommendations that have been reviewed
- Taskforce members should review the remaining recommendations to iron out where language can be enhanced
- Taskforce members should look at 911 for the next meeting