

JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

Minutes

August 29, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Council was held on August 29, 2025, at 3:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Daniel Elliott, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Daniel Elliott, Co-Chair; Senator Brandon J. Storm, Co-Chair; Senator Danny Carroll; Representative Nick Wilson; and Christina Weeter for Robbie Fletcher, Mona Womack for Keith Jackson, Dr. Katie Marks, Damon Preston, Randy White, Paula Garner, Steven Gold, and Zach Ramsey.

Guests: Dr. David Finke, Chair, Juvenile Justice Advisory Board (JJAB); and Elzie Burgher, Executive Director, Office of Support Services, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

LRC Staff: Roberta Kiser, Stephanie Larkin, Matissa Robinson, Randall Roof, Joshua Shelepak, and Robert Wright.

Approval of Minutes of the November 08, 2024 Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 08, 2024, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Introductory Remarks

Chair Elliott recognized the newest member of the committee, Representative Nick Wilson.

Agency Updates

Chair Elliott reviewed a report provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) regarding implementation of legislation enacted during the 2023, 2024, and 2025 Regular Sessions; Family Accountability, Intervention, and Response (FAIR) Teams outcomes and mandated member attendance; and trends in juvenile complaint filings.

Ms. Weeter discussed efforts made by the Kentucky Department of Education to reduce the number of students referred to the court system for truancy.

Juvenile Justice Advisory Board Update

Dr. David Finke, Chair, JJAB, and Elzie Burgher, Executive Director, Office of Support

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/373>

Services, DJJ, provided an overview of the operations of the JJAB.

In response to Chair Elliott, Dr. Finke provided the number of JJAB board members, and outlined JJAB's meeting schedule and rotating meeting locations. He discussed JJAB's mission and confirmed the board's recommendations are presented annually and triennially. Dr. Finke detailed JJAB's criteria for awarding grant funds.

In response to Ms. Garner, Dr. Finke confirmed the source of JJAB's grant awards. He specified total grant funds awarded in 2025 and the estimated grant funds to be awarded in 2026.

In response to Dr. Marks, Dr. Finke welcomed collaboration with the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID).

In response to Mr. Preston, Dr. Finke detailed participation levels among JJAB board members.

Department of Juvenile Justice Update

Randy White, Commissioner, DJJ, and Mona Womack, Deputy Secretary, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, provided an update on the DJJ. Commissioner White reaffirmed his commitment to continually improving and investing in the DJJ. Ms. Womack provided an update on the ongoing investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice regarding conditions at Kentucky youth detention centers.

Commissioner White discussed the impact of several pieces of legislation on DJJ's population; detailed initiatives to address DJJ staffing, including gubernatorial requested raises for security staff and legislative appropriations to increase DJJ salaries; outlined efforts to bolster DJJ recruitment and retention; discussed training in DJJ facilities, which includes emergency response training; asserted DJJ's data systems were outdated and detailed how they have been updated for the current population; detailed critical improvements to DJJ detention centers; detailed the status of renovations to the Jefferson County Youth Detention Center as required by 2023 RS HB 3 and 2024 RS HB 6; discussed actions taken for DJJ detention centers across the state as required by 2023 RS SB 162; detailed DJJ's efforts to invest in mental health services for its youth population, including hiring a qualified mental health professional at every DJJ facility; outlined challenges to providing mental health services in detention, including limitations in the programming DJJ can provide; stressed the continued need for a high acuity mental health facility; and detailed new physical management techniques implemented by DJJ to reduce medical emergencies associated with physical restraining.

In response to Chair Elliott, Commissioner White clarified which Louisville DJJ detention

centers and which state-wide DJJ detention centers house high-risk and low-risk offenders.

In response to Mr. Preston, Commissioner White detailed the reason for assessing detained youth as required by 2023 RS SB 162.

In response to Ms. Garner, Commissioner White discussed the cost of renovating both Louisville DJJ detention centers. He discussed DJJ's progress on providing prevention and re-entry services.

In response to Mr. Gold, Commissioner White discussed DJJ possibly contracting a third party for electronic monitoring.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:27 PM.