

# JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

## Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the 2023 Interim

October 31, 2023

### Call to Order and Roll Call

The sixth meeting of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Council was at 10 a.m. Tuesday, October 31, 2023, in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Whitney Westerfield, chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Whitney Westerfield, non-voting co-chair; Representative Daniel Elliott, non-voting co-chair; Senators Danny Carroll, and Robin L. Webb; Representatives Kevin D. Bratcher, and Keturah Herron; John Adams, Katie Comstock, Lesa Dennis, Paula Garner, Steve Gold, Mona Womack for Kerry Harvey, Katie Marks, Damon Preston, Vicki Reed, and Tyra Walker.

Guests: Paul Witten, Kentucky Lions; Laura Karem, Supervisor, Juvenile Post-Disposition Branch, Department of Public Advocacy; Beth McMahan, Division Director, Post-Trial Division, Department of Public Advocacy; Judge John Adams, 3rd Judicial District.

LRC Staff: Roberta Kiser, Matt Trebelhorn, Brett Gillispie, and Robert Wright.

### Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Representative Elliot and seconded by Representative Bratcher to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2023, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

### Agency Updates

No member agencies had updates to share.

### Lions Quest

Paul Witten, Kentucky Lions, outlined the history and mission of Lions Quest. It is a service organization dedicated to the goal of encouraging comprehensive youth development to help children grow in a positive direction, free from the dangers of drugs and violence, and able to make positive decisions. Mr. Witten detailed Lions Quest curriculum and where it has been rolled out in Kentucky.

In response to a question from Representative Elliot, Mr. Witten stated the 16-week program occurs after school. Mr. Witten clarified that this program has also been adopted by the Larue County Public School Board and integrated into its curriculum.

In response to a question from Mr. Gold, Mr. Witten stated that there are plans to roll out a Lions Quest program in Henderson County.

In response to a question from Mr. Preston, Mr. Witten stated juveniles are assigned to Lions Quest by a judge.

In response to a question from Ms. Marks, Mr. Witten stated the effectiveness of the program in high-risk populations is being evaluated. Nicole Matia, education program specialist, provided further anecdotal examples of the effectiveness of the pilot program in Alabama.

### **Post-Disposition Proceedings**

Laura Karem, Department of Public Advocacy (DPA) Supervisor, Juvenile Post-Disposition Branch, and Beth McMahon, DPA Post-Trial Division Director, presented on DPA's Juvenile Post-Disposition branch and post-disposition proceedings. Ms. McMahon outlined the creation of the Juvenile Post-Disposition Branch (JPDB) from a federal consent decree. Ms. Karem outlined the responsibilities of attorneys employed by the JPDB.

In response to questions from Senator Westerfield, Ms. Karem and Mr. Preston agreed to provide information regarding disposition outcomes for juveniles following their age 18 hearing. Ms. Karem stated that housing is the biggest gap in re-entry planning and education is the biggest gap for overall care. Ms. Karem stated that capacity issues lead to juveniles being given priority in terms of treatment.

In response to a question from Representative Herron, Ms. McMahon spoke about education being the biggest gap for JPDB juveniles in terms of overall care.

### **Perspectives on Overrides**

Judge John Adams, 3rd Judicial District, and Beth McMahon, DPA Post-Trial Division Director, discussed judicial overrides. Judge Adams discussed Senate Bill 200's effect and how it reduced the size of juvenile court dockets. Judge Adams added that he prefers to call overrides "judicial considerations."

In response to a question from Senator Westerfield, Judge Adams agreed with Senator Westerfield that not all jurisdictions look at overrides as so-called "judicial considerations."

In response to a request from Senator Westerfield, Mr. Preston agreed to provide information regarding the number of overrides by county. Judge Adams also agreed to provide Christian County courts' memorandum of understanding.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Juvenile Justice Oversight Council adjourned at 11:06 a.m.