

Ad Hoc Advisory Board Reports

Volume 4

Digest of Written Comments

Submitted January 17 – December 31, 2002



January 27, 2003

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PREFACE

This report contains the written comments made by persons to the Advisory Board of the Juvenile Justice Commission through letters, e-mail, comments made on the public hearing comment cards or on the Comprehensive Strategy Survey form, or the Agency Survey form from January, 2001 to approximately January, 2002.

The Report is divided as follows:

- The Written Comments Submitted at the First-Round of Public Hearings (January-February 2002) either directly or through the Public Hearing Comment Cards or the Comprehensive Strategy Survey Forms, and the comments received by mail and e-mail from January, 2001 to January, 2002.
- The Written Comments from the Surveyed Agencies (Judges, Sheriffs, Clerks of Court, and Indigent Defenders).
- The Written Comments Provided at the Second-Round of Public Hearings Held October 15-November 14, 2002.
- A List of Materials Submitted at Both Rounds of Public Hearings.

In some cases the written comments contain the same information made orally by persons at the public hearings. In most cases, however, the written comments and documents submitted provide new information.

The written comments, together with the oral comments from the public hearings and other sources, were used by the Planning Team and the Advisory Board in the formulation of findings and recommendations.

WRITTEN COMMENTS
SUBMITTED BETWEEN
JANUARY 17 – DECEMBER 31, 2002

Louisiana Juvenile Justice Commission
Written Comments
Submitted January 17 – December 31, 2002

Ascension Parish

1. I listed above as one of my reasons for visiting this website that “my child is a victim”. My child is currently “in the system” because he drew a picture three years ago, at home. Last year, this picture made its way to my other son’s middle school when he took his brother’s old sketchpad to school. My older son was charged with a felony, even though he never took this picture to his high school, showed it to anyone there, or ever intended it to leave his home. Its been almost a year now, and he has yet to stand before a judge and enter a plea. I think you would agree that clogging up our courts with such insanity does a real disservice to the citizens of this state, not to mention, how the seriousness of this ridiculous charge has completely ravaged the life of our family. My recommendation? DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE INSANE ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES THAT ARE IN PLACE IN OUR SCHOOL SYSTEMS! There is something seriously wrong when a child who brings nail clippers, or a drawing of GI Joe, or a picture of a gun, or who points a finger in childplay, saying “Bang” is treated the same as if they had brought a loaded semi-automatic to school. What do they learn about justice? And one more thing – out of school suspension is a loser. Staying at home, watching TV, and, in most cases, alone because Mom & Dad both work or single parent home, give a child too much idle time. My youngest child has had out of school suspension 3 days (couldn’t sit still, disrupted the class) and Saturday detention (he has a big mouth!). Of the two punishments, for him the Saturday detention was the worst, because he had to give up his playtime and go to school and do some work. I think you see what I am headed here. I AM a concerned citizen, most concerned for our children. As far as a real juvenile offenders who commit real crimes, your early intervention plan sounds good. Also, programs to help these kids deal with the problems in their lives which lead to delinquency and crime would seem more helpful than just incarceration.

Bossier Parish

1. I feel that the court system blames the parents for all the children’s problems without looking at the whole picture. The court system needs to look at the whole picture before passing judgement on the parents and aid in helping the parents in getting better mental health services for the parents with children that have mental health issues and end up in the court system. They need to quit labeling our children that do have mental problems and problem children. They need to stop passing judgement without walking in some of our shoes of disabled/mental children.

2. I have been providing nursing care to the juveniles at the Bossier Detention Center for 2 years now. As a life-long resident of Bossier Parish, I am ashamed of the facility and lack of intervention we provide our juveniles. The plant facility is deplorable. Training for the staff that works there is limited. They have no clue about Crisis Intervention. The way to defuse any situation with some of the staff is to MACE the child. The health care of these juveniles, needless to say, is lacking. My time is limited with the juveniles secondary to limited money for healthcare matters. I have seen juveniles with every kind of sexually transmitted disease that can be had. I could write a book. When questioning juveniles about their sexual activity, using protection during sex to prevent contracting a STD, illicit drug use, birth control, I get maybe 1 out of 100 that has not done all of the above. When I question their knowledge base about the consequences of their actions, needless to say, it is lacking. The SEX EDUCATION CLASSES in our public school systems are a joke. Health care professionals should be teaching these subjects. They need to be taught in the Detention Facility. They deserve to be told the facts about consequences of bad decision making. Most of these juveniles have mental or emotional problems that need to be identified but when you only have staff that has no education in these fields, and you only pay minimum wage, you never will have quality, caring staff. I have written letters to the Police Jury in Bossier parish about conditions at the Detention Center. Each and every jury member realizes the problems facing our parish but the money is not there to hire professional people. My heart hurts that I can't afford to donate my time to these juveniles and assist the facility any way I could. I commend the Police Jury for attempting to correct some of the facilities' problems but their hands are tied with no money. We continue to build ADULT FACILITIES. If we put our money in our youth with programs of prevention, intervention and involving healthcare professionals in their care needs, we would not need the adult facilities. The situation as it is, we are only babysitting juveniles until they turn 18 yrs. Then sending them to adult jails. I have seen juveniles brought into detention for minor infarctions, leave destined to return because the only education they got was how to commit a more serious infarction. I've had juveniles sentenced there for months who have told me they were not going to return to school because they now were so behind in school, they would never catch up. All because they do not receive an education while incarcerated. I personally have seen adult facilities better than what we house and provide for our juveniles. They are our future. I'm ashamed of what we have in Bossier Parish and will continue to dedicate myself to the betterment of our juveniles. I am employed fulltime with the Dept. of Health and Hospitals/Health Standards Section. I am very aware of infection control and what is needed. Again, I reiterate, I will continue to dedicate myself to the well-being of our children.

3. There is a need for more resources especially for mental health substance abuse shelter care and residential treatment. Secure placement needed overhaul so when offender leave, they can have a skill or better education.

Caddo Parish

1. CASA advocates work with almost all groups of children that have been mentioned tonight – children with aggressive behavior because they are victims of aggressive behavior, children in need of mental health intervention, children who need tutoring, children who sometimes just need someone to listen to their side of the story.
2. Often times the court appointed attorneys rely on the CASA to bring the child's needs to the attention of the court.
3. Judge Gallagher is responsible for the CASA program idea taking root in Shreveport-Bossier. But no funding has been provided from the state until 2001. We need continued support for a program that can advocate for children before they become a part of the juvenile delinquency system. CASA is an early advocacy for children who need an advocate in the courtroom prior to involvement in the detention system.
4. Those accused of child abuse cannot be allowed to change it into a custody battle. These little victims shouldn't be victimized again by being those who have to live with who they said abused them.
5. Yes – Suggestions for public forums around Louisiana.
6. Identify those on panel with name cards in front of them so that audience knows them.
7. Tripod with written names, address, website information that is pertinent.
8. Card that identifies the Commission members for future reference as handout.
9. Card that identifies the Legislatures that are involved for future reference as handout.
10. Card that identifies the people involved in this specific concern for future reference, as handout.
11. Ask audience to hold applause for time saving.

12. Ask panelist to be mindful of making faces when public is speaking so not to intimidate those that have come to address this Commission in this public forum.
13. Be mindful that audience sits at eye level and women should not wear short skirts/dresses.
14. This Commission should have access and use of the Louisiana Youth Surveys that were conducted by DOE/OADA and Communities That Care and share this information/data to others in the prevention/intervention fields so to address the identified risk factors made by Louisiana youth.
15. Sixty-six school systems were surveyed (the students) and identified risk factors pertinent to their individual schools/area. As service providers and agencies involved and interested in preventing these risk factors from germinating, this data can be used as we implement programs and resources to address crime, criminal behavior, etc. – in example, lack of commitment to education, drug abuse, etc.
16. This data is available to a limited degree by “net” – but when the surveys were completed, data compiled, the public was not given access to the information. The individual school boards were given the right to keep this data from the public if they want(ed) to so not to identify school by school risk factors that the students identified. In example, Byrd High may not be a “blue ribbon” school if the data was shared with the public, so this system may have kept the data on their Youth Survey confidential. Net information is by Parish, only.
17. Legislatures consider imposing those in Federally/State funded residences a mandate that ALL school age youth MUST attend school as required by law or risk the families’ access to this shelter. Accountability. It is a right and responsibility of parents and students that school age youth attend school, squash the loophole that those getting assistance for housing not abide by the same rules. In other words, harmonize the accountability that if you get funds from anywhere, you MUST assure that your school age youth are attending school of some type or else!
18. Judge Matlock mentioned seriously addressing the problems and not running from the real issues...I agree. Risk factors have been identified by our Youth in Louisiana. Use this relevant and pertinent data to implement any and all changes that this Juvenile Justice Commission is considering.
19. I am a parent of a child with a mental illness and that means she has a VERY GOOD chance of becoming a part of the juvenile justice system.

20. Currently, 110,000 kids in our state need mental health services but only 7% are getting help. We know that as many as half of the nation's 100,000 juvenile inmates have serious mental illnesses. The number one priority when it comes to "strengthening the family" and other items you have listed in your survey is to have mental health services available for each and every child and youth. Making sure these kids get the medical attention they need is the right and compassionate thing to do.
21. Both sons are locked up (17 & 14). Could not get help in time for either one. The one 14 yr. old filled out five (5) FINS forms, never received an answer. He is serving 6 months. My 17 yr. old is still in lock up in Monroe. He has been away from home since he was 13. The doctor misdiagnosed both sons.
22. Concerned about the arresting of school age children for age appropriate behavior. I believe that is excessive and somewhat unnecessary. I believe the policy in Caddo parish that allows children from the ages of ten up to be arrested at school for non-violent acts such as disturbing the peace and taunting students is an extreme measure. As a concerned parent and citizen, I believe that the schools are not being held accountable and need to be more responsible to the needs of children – emotionally.

Calcasieu Parish

1. We've left out a basic human need that may already be a contributing factor for most, if not all problems incurred.
2. As a community of citizens, on a larger level, we need to eliminate stumbling blocks and open up opportunity on a community, state, and national level, that provide parents the opportunity to take advantage of rearing their own children.
3. In my opinion, this is the best option for families – parents and children, communities, states and nations. We need systems that seek to open doors for people – rather than closing doors upon those with difficulties and problems. Helping parents gives most children what they want and need.
4. Programs for teens – one of the big reasons teens say they use drugs or hand out w/bad influences is boredom. We need more recreational facilities, youth groups, and mentoring programs.
5. I am a teacher and have a very bright student in my class who has 43 absences to date (1/23/02). Her parents just will not let her to school and there is a 5 year history of this problem. Why can't something be done?
6. I am very glad I came to this meeting, while here, I was introduced to Detective Cormier with the Sheriff's Dept. Someone with his office will

contact me about starting something as simple as checking the address of released sexual offenders to make sure law enforcement knows if they have moved to another area of the city or parish without filing an address change and any other task I could perform by starting some type of watch dog group to protect our children and grandchildren.

7. LA needs more services to Juvenile sexual offenders and their families.
8. Funds made available to families and juvenile offenders to be able to obtain outpatient and intensive outpatient services (treatment)
9. More residential facilities are needed that specialize in juvenile sexual offenders.
10. The state needs to recruit families and parents to report their juveniles that commit sexual crimes.
11. Risk assessments should be conducted throughout the state before sentencing.
12. Not isolating the child in a treatment plan – include family, school community, etc. in his/her treatment plan.
13. Sponsoring mentoring programs.
14. Improving the court system in regards to too many continuances so that services can be expedited.
15. I would make sense to have after school programs for children especially during the peak delinquent times from 3pm to 6pm. Some examples of programs would be: computer, skills training (shop-fix up old cars) carpentry skills, cooking skills and college bound activities.
16. I would also like to recommend an alternative to the alternative school. So many children are being expelled from their regular school settings and are sent to the alternative school. Once at the alternative school, the youth can be expelled for a minor infraction. Once the youth is expelled from the alternative school, they are sent home and nothing to do but do delinquent activities. i.e. I know of a thirteen year old girl who was expelled from middle school on the first day of school. Her mother failed to enroll her in the alternative school thus she ended up repeating the seventh grade for the third time and while she was out of school, she used substances and became pregnant.
17. I would also like to see a transition home for children/youth exiting state custody ei OCS, OYD, OMH. This transition home would help with job

training, GED completion, skills building. We see many young people leaving state custody not knowing how to read, extremely limited in social skills and not able to work cohesively with others in the community.

18. There is not one easy answer for the many needs for our children in this community. It will take a lot of money and patience to work with our children. We all need to realize that the children of today will be the ones providing for us in the future. Children are our greatest resource and above all, we need to work on reverence.
19. I personally feel that since the state pays for a pregnant teen to have prenatal care as well as hospitalization when the baby comes, the state should also pay for the parents of these new infants to attend parenting classes either immediately before or shortly after the baby is born. At this time, nothing is mandated for these parents who are only children themselves and know nothing about being parents. Many children at this time are neglected, abused and pushed to the side. If these parents don't learn how to effectively be parents, later on down the line these little children may and could cause problems and end up in the juvenile justice system. Early intervention and prevention would be much more cost effective as well as morally correct as opposed to entering the juvenile system. It would also make my job as a CASA much easier.
20. We have a 14yr old that was granted by Judge Ezell the right to tell us (the domicile parents) where he wants to be each weekend (with his mother or us). He talks back and tells us that he can do what he wants because the Judge said he can. This 14 yr. Old is running our home. Judges should take the time to talk with the parents, not just attorneys and teens.
21. Please let me know the correct procedures a principal can take when a parent refuse to recognize or visit the school in order to get their child evaluated when we know there is a need. After all, it is about the child —not the parent.
22. Parent/Child relationship is the focus.
23. Regarding Prevention: Infant Mental Health – the office of Public Health has a program called Nurse/Family Partnership Program for first-time mothers. To enter the program, the first-time mother must be at 26 weeks of pregnancy or less and have medicaid. The nurse stays with the mother and child up to the child's 2 yrs of age. Home visits are made twice per month and a structured educational protocol is presented. The Office of Mental Health has now joined in partnership with OPH to provide a mental health component to the nurse's intervention.
24. Intensive home based programs by LCSW's, LPC's, etc.

25. Early and accurate diagnosis is an absolute must. Mental illness can be genetically predisposed or influenced by its environment. Every area of a child's life should be addressed and be a part of an individual treatment plan. Children having behavioral problems or mental illness who have a crack addicted mother and a sexual offending father need a "safe" place to receive treatment while the parents are also required to complete a treatment program. Relatives and communities should be used to develop support systems.

26. Rural needs – funding for services

- Parenting classes for adults/pregnant teens
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- A mentor Program using juvenile peers – to help with school work and social skills, manners
- Transportation for assessments of children/parents
- After school care – places for children to go that is in a safe and positive atmosphere, recreation, art, music to keep them off the streets.

27. Prevention – monitoring – aftercare.

28. Transitional assistance programs are necessary. Very little is done to institute these programs. Programs are instituted by individual agencies such as OCS, OYD, and parish agency. A coalition needs to be formed (one team).

29. Mentoring programs allocated through the Workforce Investment Act are not being earmarked or used for the kids that need them. Agencies pass kids on through the system.

30. A coalition should be formed to include all agencies before a kid is put in the system.

31. A transitional program is very important, particularly in this area.

32. When working with families, more emphasis should be placed on parent responsibility and accountability.

East Baton Rouge Parish

1. It is difficult to control juveniles who con-talk to top officials at will. Law-abiding citizens don't have that privilege.
2. Children's mental health services are needed throughout the state. State and private agencies who work with children need to be funded fully. Stop the

budget cuts to children's programs – Mental Health, Child Protection, Foster Care, Infant Programs, etc. Every time there are state budget cuts, they impact disproportionately on DHH & DSS and other children's programs. If we want to stop juvenile violence, we must continue to fund prevention programs. We must put children first in this state to stop the continuing downward spiral.

3. The staff doesn't care and are only there to receive a paycheck. I work in the system that make recommendations that are scratched because they say the services cannot be offered. The kids have gone through traumatic experiences that have never been dealt with and to say these services will never be offered is really setting the kids up to be harden criminals. I am a witness that my sister and I tried to et help for my nephew some help, but was told no services were available. It wasn't until he got into the legal system that he actually got help. It's sad!
4. Also FINS is a joke. The workers are overworked and severely underpaid so they don't care.
5. Cultural parental workshops to share white family success with their law, percentage of white youth being incarcerated. This kind of information would be welcomed by African American families and resource workers in the black communities.
6. Need to invite Covenant House or similar to Baton Rouge to handle non-criminal runaways.
7. Expansion of Greenwell Springs adolescent drug wing for more service.
8. Repeal of laws that require destruction of OCS case files after 30 days.
9. Interdisciplinary child abuse investigative teams housed together (police, OCS, medical, etc).

Iberia Parish

1. OCS cases have on occasions, become custody battles between mother and father and sometimes between a parent and foster parents. Child custody battles do not belong in Juvenile Court. They belong in Civil District Court. Parents take advantage of being provided free attorneys through the Indigent Defense Board to fight custody battles that should be fought in District Court with paid attorneys.
2. More funding for local Indigent Defense Boards to staff and track juvenile cases post disposition to assist in securing early release.
3. Any public juvenile system must be community based on the DA's model and not statewide such as a AG's model. Local public systems know the local judges and the local prosecutors and can better handle local issues.

Jefferson Parish

1. Please be careful about labeling children according to their parents' financial situation. Some parents who seem to make "enough" money to locate services may not actually have all the money their W-2 indicates. Single parents with a decent income still have all of the expenses and two-parent family incurs. Often if there is not quite enough money for health insurance (or even if health insurance is available, medical bills for special needs children add up quickly, thus deducting from the base salary.
2. When making decisions about children – just make the decisions based on the children. Let the programs be for all the children. Some parents who have resources don't have enough sense to recognize or use them.
3. Services need to be given before a child suffers to the degree of missing school.
4. FINS does not work in the situation of when schools put out children and days are counted missing.
5. On their disability – I am a parent that is part of a Westbank parent support group. The group gets together to learn about services, get information from our leaders in children services about our schools, court system, mental health, and government leaders.
6. Why does a child have to be in FINS, OCS, Juvenile Justice, etc. to get any decent services and then sometimes you don't get that. I have been through FINS, OCS, Mental Health, Medicaid Rehab Providers, etc. I even had to go through the court systems with the fingers being pointed to me instead of everything and everybody working together.
7. We need wrap around service instead of our children being snatched out of our homes.
8. I am an advocate for all children, as well as my own. Teachers will put out children with special needs. These days add up and then they get turned into FINS.
9. Many times the parents are back in court with the same offense (ex. Abuse of a child) and it is discovered that the parent(s) did not do what they were ordered to do.
10. I would also like to see and experience more concern and professionalism from OCS personnel. As a school counselor, I am mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect. If and when I do make a report, I don't always get professional responses. Recently, I wrote a letter to Mr. Roy

Juncker about an OCS social worker who showed unprofessionalism in dealing with one of our parents and child. Mr. Juncker responded to my concern immediately by telephone and in a letter. I appreciated his professionalism and response in a timely manner. He made a report to the social worker's supervisor regarding my concern. It is my belief that we need more people who show a genuine concern. Perhaps the OCS workers are overworked and/or developing apathy. This has been a big concern with many professionals both in and out of the system.

Lafayette Parish

1. Would like specialized juvenile courts
2. Need parent workshops
3. Need non-profit law counsel
4. Would like school funding to be based on the number of days students actually attend school.
5. Need to recognize spirituality
6. Provide transportation to juveniles
7. Why have privatized phone service at state facilities
8. What kind of good care comes out of children after they leave the facilities
9. Wants all cases of sexual abuse to be investigated by a multidisciplinary team
10. Need licensing of detention centers
11. Safety standards
12. DHH conducted inspections until 1999
13. Contract with healthcare
14. Three full-time school teachers and three teacher's aides
15. Need to address issues in a comprehensive manner
 - 150 service beds
 - ½ of 1%
 - 5200 probation & parole
 - 3200 local probation agencies
 - 146 track

- early intervention
- expand FINS
- disproportionate representation
- graduated sanctions

16. Will have someone working in each school (absences)

17. Parental responsibility

18. Special Ed alternative 3rd – 12th

Lincoln Parish

1. Redirect funds from programs that are under funded and unable to carry out planned services.
2. Require more from juveniles in non-monetary restitution.

St. Martin Parish

1. Regional facilities with university input
2. Regional courts with total jurisdiction
3. Eliminate local ordinances concerning juvenile matters

St. Tammany Parish

1. Public mental health facilities could provide more services/treatment to the indigent population if, as usually happens, budgets are cut, positions are frozen and/or abolished.
2. More hospital beds are needed for severely emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. The hatchet job done on NOAH (New Orleans Adolescent Hospital) created severe problems. Southeast La. Hospital has only 8 or 10 children's beds for the entire state. Some of those beds were closed because there was not staff. Appalling! Salaries are so low that decent staff won't apply or, if they do work, they soon leave for more pay in the private sector.
3. As a state employee of almost 24 years, I have watched that, as economic times get tough, social services are the first to be cut, not the last. We put up tons of money for professional football, etc., and, yet, by doing so, neglect our children and families. This only costs more money in the long run. The state of La. is a terrible parent.

Washington Parish

1. Take another look at longer stays in mental health facilities. I don't believe that problems that have taken years to develop can be cured/remedied in one (1) week.
2. Special training should be made available to social workers and psychologists regarding working with children is needed. Most training programs do not offer much relative to young children. Most people that we hire must learn on the job. This training should be based on models that have proven to be effective with children.

West Baton Rouge Parish

1. I think group homes are a very powerful tool in alleviating the current overload of incarcerated youth. Furthermore, if operated properly, they could fill in for the deficits that the young offender has suffered, socially and family. I think more attention and concentration of resources should be devoted to this valuable asset.

West Carroll Parish

1. Yes, all juveniles incarcerated who read below a certain level (say 8th grade) must attend a class provided for this purpose by the system. Also, a basic math class would be helpful. In taking these classes and their accomplishment or score, this could be used as a consideration for early release.
2. I know money and people to do this job may be limited but I think retirees in education and other fields may be a good place to look. Many need and want to be useful and probably wouldn't demand top dollar.

Miscellaneous Comments

1. Children are members of a family and they are best served in their families! The family should be supported in their efforts as the primary decision-maker for their child. Family members should not be "spectators" but active participants in the design, development and implementation of a system of care created to serve them.
2. Communities, especially the school system, teachers, administrators need psycho-education when dealing with behaviorally different children. It is my strong belief that the majority of children within the juvenile justice system are children who were not diagnosed with mental disorders. As a result, they become conduct disordered which is a very difficult population to turn around. Therefore, as long as we continue to cut the mental health budget, all the

revamping of the JJS will not be effective. Agencies serving children and families should share joint ownership. This sounds good but will only happen when agencies pool funds and pilot projects are developed from them. Other states have done this and have met with great success. As long as they have separate monies, joint ownership will never happen. In closing, I am a family member who sacrificed just about everything to prevent my child from ending up in the JJ system. With all my strength and dedication to my son, it was a close call but we prevailed for many reasons. Because I am an empowered parent, and I used a strength-based approach in raising him, WE WON!! He is not in the Air Force and working at the Pentagon. He is my inspiration and my hope for all other children like him and their families.

3. The only way to effectively intervene with children, for the most part, is to engage families and extended families in educational process which assist them in dealing with the child/adol. The family is on the front line and ultimately do deal with the child. We have only been involved on the backside of problems which makes prevention difficult if not impossible.

WRITTEN COMMENTS
FROM SURVEYED AGENCIES
JULY, 2002

COMMENTS/CONCERNS OF JUDGES

Please list the most critical inter-agency problems that you have in coordinating with other agencies in the Juvenile Justice System in your jurisdiction.

1. The FINS program provides coordinating future of our office, contact with schools, etc. DA has good juvenile program and employees.
2. Often times we will be at a hearing ready to proceed only to find out a party or multiple parties (usually parents) have not been served. This is a result of the failure of OCS to either get papers to DA in time or a breakdown between agencies to communicate. This often causes a great deal of down time and parties to have to return to Court multiple times. A coordinator in the department could relieve a great deal of these problems by coordinating between workers and clerk and DA. A longer lead-time between filing a complaint and the time of the hearing.
3. The actual workers are overworked – caseloads are too large. Visitation schedules are a problem.
4. Lack of resources and insufficient beds for pre-adjudication violent and habitual juvenile offenders who must be released to the very people who want them to be incarcerated, the juvenile's family.
5. The biggest challenges in this rural district would be providing services regarding mental and drug problems. I hope that at least one of the judges on the "Advisory Board" is from a rural district. I do not believe a juvenile judge from an urban district can fully understand the lack of resources that a judge from a rural district must cope with.
6. Lack of detention space, lack of mental health treatment, overworked probation officers, lack of group homes for FINS, lack of support facilities in community (parenting cases, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, mentoring).
7. Our office of Juvenile Services should be set up to provide services to juveniles. There is too much duplication of services and also transferring responsibility from one agency to another – this way only one department would be responsible for juvenile service even after adjudication of delinquent.
8. Sharing of information in all juvenile cases. Lack of trained staff/officers in delinquent. Coordination between DA's office and state (OCS) in CINC cases.

9. The biggest problem is finding space in a juvenile detention facility to house juveniles awaiting adjudication or disposition.
10. Immediate placement of juvenile offenders.
11. Knowledge of various programs for support from OYD and CSS.
12. Constant battle between OCS and OYD over which agency should handle certain cases.
13. Service of process of pleadings and notice of appearance in court. Transportation of juveniles to court from detention and youth shelter.
14. Receiving information in a timely manner on 72-hour hearings. Willingness of OCS to work with CASA. FINS unwillingness to work with court.
15. Lack of cooperation bordering on hostility between OYD and OCS.

COMMENTS/CONCERNS OF SHERIFFS

Please list the most critical inter-agency problems that you have in coordinating with other agencies in the Juvenile Justice System in your jurisdiction.

1. Finding bed space for juvenile offenders in juvenile detention facilities.
2. Little or no communication between agencies in Second Judicial District (Claiborne, Bienville, Jackson) regarding juvenile matters.
3. We have no Juvenile Detention Facilities in the 5th District. We have to reply on the 4th and 6th Districts to find an empty bed when the serious need arises.
4. Other than the DA's office, the Courts and FINS, we (the Sheriff's office) are the only Juvenile Justice Agency in our jurisdiction. We have no Juvenile Detention facility, no shelter for runaway and abused children and no Truancy Center. We rely on the St. John office of Community Service (OCS) as we have no OCS office in St. Charles Parish. We sometimes feel like "step children" and OCS services are lacking in St. Charles Parish. An OCS office within St. Charles Parish would be a positive step towards providing adequate OCS services.
5. Location and availability
6. Overcoming federal guidelines relative to the sharing of juvenile records maintained by social agencies, primarily the Office of Community Services (Child Protection) and Human Services Authority (Mental Health).
7. Our law enforcement agency has developed coordinating and collaborative agreements with the school system, the local hospital and the child protection agency. Our juvenile court system employees work very closely with our law enforcement juvenile division. Together, the sheriff's department, the juvenile probation court and the school system developed our "Suspension on Site" program as well as adding resource officers and a truancy officer to our system. These salaries are shared by the school and law enforcement agencies.
8. Information Service – lack of a central database between the agencies working in our parish. Transportation of incarcerated juvenile suspects.
9. Agencies making contact with families on referrals from the sheriff's office for follow-up services in a timely fashion.

10. Small towns in Sabine Parish don't have funding for pre-trial detention of juveniles. Problem with transporting juveniles 80 miles to and from juvenile detention center for 48 or 72 hour court hearings. Need TV hook-up with judge office and detention center.
11. Huge problem with state juvenile probation (OYS), constant change in staff, unable to properly supervise youth, slow to respond to complaints-violations. Difficulty in funding placement for violators. Huge lack of sharing of information, between law-enforcement, probation and courts.
12. Car to car radio communication.

COMMENTS/CONCERNS OF CLERKS OF COURT

Please list the most critical inter-agency problems that you have in coordinating with other agencies in the Juvenile Justice System in your jurisdiction.

1. Lack of communication with the Juvenile Judges and staff
2. Most all problems have been eliminated
3. Funding the juvenile system continues to be the most critical problem. We are unable to accurately determine total cost – misc. expenses include office space, furniture, phone lines, computer equipment, copier, paper, files, computer consultant @ \$60.00/hr. In the year 2001, there were 690 new cases filed, this does not include work ongoing from previous years. The total received from 6/01-4/02 for juvenile traffic was \$423.64. The funds to support the juvenile system are generated from fees collected from the recording and civil departments.
4. There is a serious need for cross functional meetings to improve communications between the agencies involved in the Juvenile Justice system, i.e. the DAs office, CASA, Judicial Administrator, Office of Community Services (OSC), Official Youth Development (OYD) and the Clerk of Court's office, so as to:
 - Be pro-active in identifying problem areas and finding solutions in streamlining processes.
 - Build relationships between agencies
 - Gain an appreciation of how our functions and duties affect others within the Juvenile Justice system.
 - Understand the scope of each agency's responsibilities.
5. Insufficient addresses for service on requested parties. Insufficient time to serve parties on the 72 hour hearings. No funds available for witness of sheriff fees.
6. We coordinate our activities with other agencies in the juvenile justice system rather well.
7. Receiving petitions for Court timely. This situation is improving at present. Interaction with other departments that we have to deal with is good.
8. I have been in charge of juveniles for only a short time. I was assigned juveniles in December 2001. So far, I have not had any problems.

9. Placing juveniles in secure placement. Critical shortage of shelter beds. Sharing information with school system and law enforcement agencies.
10. This is a low impact area.
11. We have no problems communicating with other offices – but the amount of time given for filing of dockets, going to Court, preparing copies, keeping up with papers to be given to the juvenile officers, etc. is getting much worse. There seems to be so much more paper work and the Court time is much worse. We have a very small office (only 5 total employees) but 3 people are Court workers and handle the juvenile matters.

COMMENTS/CONCERNS OF INDIGENT DEFENDERS

Please list the most critical inter-agency problems that you have in coordinating with other agencies in the Juvenile Justice System in your jurisdiction.

1. Problems with OCS (also, they are overworked, underfunded, understaffed) – not following their own policies – poor attitudes. Need more funding to appoint attorneys for parents paid through Office Children Services. Problems/questions with TANF for CASA. Lack of training/leadership for CASA staff. Poor leadership of FINS program in Rapides Parish.
2. The problem we have is receiving reports, whether investigative, medical, etc., from the other agencies before hearing dates so that we will have time to review, subpoena witnesses, etc. We usually get the reports either the day before or on the day of the hearing, which of course, gives us no time to do anything other than to read them fast and do the best that we can.
3. Placement of mentally ill juveniles is difficult. Placement of sexual abuse victims and perpetrators is difficult. Residential placement of runaways is difficult. Residential placement of other FINS children, both pre-and-post adjudication. Safe secure placements.
4. Distance – because Cameron is a small rural parish. All of the services are provided from Calcasieu Parish (Lake Charles). The juvenile probation officer is housed in Calcasieu Parish. Calcasieu Parish is approximately 50 miles from Cameron. Getting the services to the juvenile and his/her family is our largest concern. I would like to see more services available in Cameron Parish without the juvenile having to travel 50 miles to obtain the needed services.
5. The most critical problem I have had with the juvenile justice programs is getting the necessary help for those juveniles who have low IQ's or who are slow learners. The problem comes when we are trying to find placement for them that is other than a lock down facility such as LTI. We have problems with QCS not accepting them because of their learning disabilities even after it has been ordered by the court.
6. Most dollars spent on juveniles is wasted. I was the IDB Juvenile Defender for 2½ years. The psychologists have about 3 different versions and are all the same. The strengthening programs are not helpful. Anger management should be mandatory.

7. There is no interface between juvenile justice agencies. No regular meetings nor communications network established. All agencies appear to be operating independently.
8. The need for understanding what the criteria is for the juvenile to qualify for services. Lack of communication between agencies resulting in duplication of services or no services at all.
9. There is really no general community support system. We mostly treat the effects of neglect, deprivation and abuse as manifested in delinquency. That is, we process delinquents as criminals rather than treating the underlying causes.
10. Lack of centralized management of coordination of multi-team treatment. Constant jockeying for limited funds causing conflict of agencies over cooperation. Lack of continuing education of all fields due to funding problems. Personalities.
11. OCS workers do not provide services as directed by the Court. Court ordered evaluations not performed in timely manner. OCS reports not provided ten days prior to hearing to the Court. There is no funding for representation of parents, therefore all appointments become pro bono and undesirable (see RS 46: 460.21). There is no funding for appeals of any kind for indigent clients. Again, this becomes a forced pro bono situation.

WRITTEN COMMENTS
FROM PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD
OCTOBER 15 – NOVEMBER 14, 2002

WRITTEN COMMENTS
Submitted at Public Hearings Held
October 15 – November 14, 2002

Baton Rouge

1. We need help in Baton Rouge.
2. I would like to see more emphasis and testing on kids strengths.
3. The Commission should take a look at the situation of juveniles tried as adults. Being tried as an adult doesn't make you one. The law should be changed to allow judicial or other review on a periodic basis of juveniles tried as adults. You should also take a look at the criminal justice standard used in the system relative to mental illness. Some of the children suffer from mental illnesses but do not meet the current standard known as the "McNaughten" Rule.
4. I have a grandson in Swanson Correctional Center for youth. He called me the other night and told me that he was sick (he has ashma). I feel so helpless. I called Steven Dickson's office and left a message, but no one called back. I called Ms. Kinding at Juvenile Justice, and I thank God for her – she did call me back.
5. Trauma for three years – son in facilities of Jena, and Swanson. Wish to help others avoid the torture.
6. Close TCCN now.
7. Fund more rehabilitation – less punishment.
8. I would like to give information about the service of this TASC and to comment about the critical need for therapeutic "lock-down" or secure residential facilities for the very young population of at-risk children.
9. By saying the decision to incarcerate and to release are arbitrary, aren't you maligning decisions made by the judiciary who make these decisions? Who do you think would be better able to make these decisions? Would you also malign those decision-makers if you disagreed with the outcome?
10. Con-Need changes in the system which includes who is in charge of the systems. People with high school diplomas are not able to run these institutions.

11. I was an adjudicated delinquent at age 16 and sentenced to LTI until my 21st birthday. Due to a breakdown in the implementation of court ordered treatment programs @ LTI, my case was transferred to adult court and I then served 17 years in the Louisiana State Pen. I would like to see more ex-offender participation in this very challenging effort to reform the juvenile justice system.
12. The people working in the JJ system - the reform and ideas of change are great, but for now, if the same people are left to do the job – apathy – lack of commitment.
13. I concur with the recommendations of Casey. We need safe institutions. Kids in fear cannot be rehabilitated. Close Tallulah (that's around 350 beds).

Lafayette

1. Protesting unfair treatment of young people while incarcerated.
2. Thanks for all the hard work for such an important cause.
3. Point out the urgency of the need to adopt these recommendations and move forward quickly, efficiently and potently without watering them down.
4. Strongly recommend additional funding to support the establishment of additional prevention and treatment services for alcohol and drug abuse. OAD has submitted a proposal to the legislature to satisfy this recommendation. We need your support. Also strongly recommend alcohol and drug abuse treatment services for the parents of the juveniles. Many times the child acts out due to problems in the home.
5. FINS is in favor of a comprehensive juvenile justice system and support the efforts of the JJC. FINS deals with the families on the front end in an effort to address the needs of the families and get them to help its needs before child becomes delinquent. FINS needs greater funding so as to be more effective in its efforts.
6. Would like to be involved in "The Children's Cabinet".
7. Thinks the Justice Commission should also target law enforcement. Current law enforcement has no diversionary programs nor do they care to implement any.

Lake Charles

1. The swift and efficient adoption and implementation of these findings and recommendations.
2. If dispositions include child welfare, mental health, substance abuse and other community-based providers, funds from reducing beds should be reinvested in these programs – with emphasis from regional OYD district managers. These managers understand the needs within their communities and should base such decisions on regional forums for recommendations. Models should be “state of the science” researched based.
3. Need more programs.
4. My child did not receive as much services as he needed once in the OYD system, yet, he receive services of such that he has good things to say of his experiences. I saw and heard of the great overturn of guards and employees.
5. The state should fund more rehabilitation and less punishment and reduce its reliance on incarceration.
6. Was there any pattern that studied the recidivism rate in the system?
7. Working in the street with kids and running a day treatment program, I think its totally unwise to cut beds in a secure facility. Youth are scanned very thoroughly before going into secured facilities. Everyday I have to run kids and parents sown to try and get them to school or meet curfews. The marine institute is a strong deterrent, but group homes are not set up to meet those criteria. Many youth have committed numerous crimes and 60% incarcerated are on petition O or E. If it was some way to change the youth environment when he comes home, we would have far less recidivism. I wonder if a study was done on most offenders’ background home. Many come out of the same home or family. I encourage more money be placed in halfway homes, education/vocational skills, and making parents more responsible for their children’s behavior. Judges should enforce more stringent criteria on families attending counseling when ordered or even just ensuring they go to school or meet curfew. I strongly agree that ungovernable or status offenders should not be placed in OPS&C custody.
8. I am very glad this matter is being talked about because the youth tells us how far we will go.

Monroe

1. Less expensive to properly correct and train youth in lieu of incarceration.
2. I taught for three years at SCCY – Madison. I would like to tell what is going on in Tallulah.
3. Quick and effective adoption of specific findings and recommendations.
4. Need Inpatient Adolescent Unit (Substance Abuse). According to Adolescent Substance Abuse Counselor, waiting list for adolescent females is 3-4 months.
5. OAD Region VIII has partnered with Healthy Start ABC's for the last year. We provide no cost literature and workshops for staff and pregnant.
6. We are top-heavy on the incarceration part of the system versus prevention. We have to give children a reason to want to succeed beyond the world they see around them. We need every preventative measure we can produce to give children a change to be successful in life. Somehow we have got to right our moral compass before it is too late.
7. Critical importance of prevention emphasis. Central point of entry to coordinate services and provide fast service to youth and their families. Integrate with system of online interagency information (i.e. a service point system).
8. Keep it sweet and simple. Establish a state-mentoring program.
9. I do not believe a statewide office of juvenile advocacy would be beneficial. I have represented juveniles for the IDB since 1994. I have had several chances to be a felony attorney but have declined to do so. I think if we have one office, then the rural parishes and smaller parishes will not be represented as well since New Orleans and Baton Rouge and other larger cities will require such a large percentage of the statewide resources. I believe we should keep the current IDB system in place.
10. Someone in your organization needs to find out why the administration of Westside Alternative School in Tallulah is so shabbily operated. Evidently the BESE board is not aware of the severity of the education problem there, does not care about its responsibility, or cannot do its job. Dr. Stafford and Dr. Meisel are very much aware of these problems.
11. Retirement Systems – will they remain separate for OCS & OYD employees. POST Certification – will OYD staff retain POST cert. And will OCS employees be required to have POST Cert.? Are there plans for

involving parents in mental health treatment, etc. when indicated to assure they are able to meet disciplinary and other needs of children?

12. Many agencies referred have an interest in juvenile offenders. I saw no reference to agencies that serve the juvenile with a developmental disability. It is of great concern if a juvenile facility was closed, that those youth would have to be absorbed into other existing overburdened social services agencies. It would be hoped that dollars saved by closing a facility would be diverted to other service agencies.
13. Advocating importance of prevention – central point of entry to coordinate services and provide immediate help for teens and their families.

Shreveport/Bossier

1. Teen mom 16 yrs. old in jail separated from her 2½ yr. Old child. Sent 6 mos. In Baton Rouge. Currently back in jail for not attending school and other problems. She went before the judge on yesterday 10/21/02, she is still locked up and will not go in front of the judge until December.
2. Adoption of and swift, effective action on the recommendations heard here.
3. Need to examine nature of delinquency and serious offending as a group, process and design community-based programs that address the nature of group offending and changing nature of peer groups into pro-social ones.
4. I have in my caseload alone 6-10 children (this year) who have no where to receive mental health/behavioral long-term treatment of their problems. Small group home treatment homes for children between 8-12 who have been severely abused and are acting out, are needed. Also homes for children with attachment disorders and childhood bipolar. There are homes in south LA but I cannot get NOLA children in them; there are homes in other states for those residents. We need homes/facilities in NOLA; all of these children are eventually involved in the justice system and this could have been averted earlier on with proper intervention services. These children are not criminals but are victims of early abuse, neglect, drug use, etc. In short, NOLA needs specialized small group homes for Medicaid and non-Medicaid eligible youth 8-12 & 12-17.
5. Need more forums like this. This allows information to be disseminated on a larger scale.
6. This commission should utilize the factual survey information (data) gathered in most parishes "CTC Youth Survey" when implementing any changes as a PREVENTATIVE action. Youths answered the survey(s), parish by parish, giving the law makers pertinent information about what our youth are doing – drugs, tobacco, etc – in effort to prevent "risk factors" from germinating. Encourage **ALL** Departments (Education, Health, etc) to utilize youth survey risk-factor information.

Alexandria

1. Swift adoptions and action on the findings and complete recommendations.
2. Extensive evaluation of current system. Concept of one agency to support and meet the needs of children and families is not new. The difficulty has been and will be the proper and sufficient funding.
3. In the past few years, I have seen the politicians cut budgets for mental health and substance abuse thus enburdening the judicial systems to have more children locked up and in our courts with mental health and substance abuse problems instead of those with discipline problems.

St. Tammany

1. I commend the commission for listening during the earlier public meetings to the relatively small group of people in LJDA who advocated for mandatory licensing of juvenile detention facilities throughout the state. This issue is very important to the welfare of detained juveniles. During public awareness, point out the difference between **detention** and long-term, post-adjudication **incarceration**.
2. Close TCCY **now**.
3. Draft looks very comprehensive. I truly hope action **will** be taken during this administration so as not to be lost in the shuffle. Thanks for the work and time commitment.
4. Creation of one agency for CYF is wonderful. Under training – need to train agency staff in youth development concept and need to teach respect to children in all dealings. Recommendations – from AEC Foundation to close one LTT is right on target. Kids are locked up because the beds are there – community-based services are not. Seamless continuum of services is essential.
5. As a school counselor who is also an LPC/LMFT, I could provide more mental health services if I was freed of my **heavy** administrative burden. We don't need more social workers, it's the schools – we need to allow counselors their time to counsel. A part-time or full-time secretary for counselors in school – especially high schools, would be more effective. Existing school psychologists could see cases out of reach of the school counselor.
6. Youth need to be held accountable for illegal behavior. Single point of entry, temporary processing centers could be created for case management of ATOD issues. All youth offender programs should include parental involvement in education and intervention. More time needs to be provided for prevention programs aided toward violence prevention.

Westbank

1. Recommend referral to more residential programs instead of incarceration. Develop more community-based alternatives to serve kids. Increasing opportunities for education and training by moving money away from facilities that simply incarcerate youth. Reallocate funds for parenting programs.
2. The data presented by Annie Casey's group at this meeting demands a response. The knowledge base to make these needed changes exists. However, leadership by the legislative, executive and judicial branches is required. In this case, a change is needed by all branches, and continued blame-shifting is not a service to the public. Continued inaction in the face of these findings can only say to the public that the elected leadership of this state has failed Louisiana's children, families and communities.
3. There is not adequate emphasis on the lack of accountability on part of the officials or the juvenile justice system. There is no 'immediate' intermediate solution – most of the recommendations will take months and years. There is a fear of creating 'another' bureaucracy. We need more rehab, less punishment by decriminalizing law level infractions. Shift money 'now' to rehab/mental health, from a secure facility. My child received substance abuse counseling but there was inadequate time to let the problem work. Erroneous 'tickets' at detention center – then view as excuse to incarcerate. I am a CPA and am familiar with legalese – it is this very legalese that has often been exploited by companies like Enron to subvert the intent of the regulations. These recommendations appear to have been drafted by people who are not particularly familiar with the problem. The parents involved have superior intuitive wisdom on the matter. When I came to the USA, I had an idealized perception of the justice system in the USA, where I thought they would rather let free 100 guilty persons than incarcerate a single innocent. I am severely disappointed by what I have seen of the juvenile justice system. Lack of due process, misuse of authority and intimidation, lack of accountability.
4. We need to move now to get kids out of the system now.
5. The urgency of adapting and following effectively the findings and recommendations as soon as possible.
6. Speak on options for judges.
7. Increase the work of youth challenge even into the individual communication of LA.
8. Redirect Department of Corrections dollars to Prevention and Intervention Services primarily alternative education and substance abuse treatment for adolescents.

9. Have more youth programs for young youths. Much more mental counseling facilities where young youths can get to express themselves, to let out their feelings. Need to get youth placement such as Job Corps for my son, but he has been signed in to go in October but has never been called to go.
10. If consolidation of all agencies concerning youth in state's custody occurs, what will become of ongoing efforts such as the Office of Community Services attempt to become nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Children and Family Services? Will "all ships rise" – in other words, will OCS efforts be supported and expanded to this new consolidated office of children, youth and families?
11. I myself, ask for help within the judicial system for my son. Response given was that my son didn't really commit a crucial crime, therefore, no help could be given. What do you call a crucial crime?
12. We greatly appreciate the work of Youth Challenge, Army National guard. As active workers among inner-city New Orleans youth, we work daily with many at risk youth in close relationships involving their families. Our kids are the "future criminals of America" who are, as a direct result of discipleship and mentoring, avoiding sex, drugs, alcohol and crime. They are succeeding in school. Youth Challenge gives our kids a future and a hope which takes them further than our limited scope. They want and take our kids and effectively educate them, often raising teens by 4 grade levels in the 5 month residency program. They take at risk troubled youth and turn them into effective, productive young adults and fine Americans. The Youth Challenge program works. We applaud their success and wish to encourage the Juvenile Justice Commission to support and promote this fine Army National Guard Program which is crime preventative.
13. Upon reviewing the Commission's Draft Recommendations, I see no mention of the needs/service supports for children, adolescents, and often times the parents who have mild mental retardation and/or developmental disability. These persons tend to fall between the cracks, whereby MH services and substance abuse services are essentially non-existent. I am often told that due to their cognitive deficits, they would benefit from traditional services as currently developed. Without these services, the young male adolescents, the African American males, in particular end up in the juvenile correction facilities. Please, please, give more attention to the population. Its too large to go unnoticed/overlooked.
14. As a pastor, I would very much like to offer my services and facility for community service as an alternative to incarceration. Please feel free to contact me at the telephone number listed.

Eastbank

1. Drop outs increase probably because of youths going to prisons. Retention in the LEAP is increasing drop outs. New Orleans public schools have lost 11,000 students since 1999 the beginning of LEAP. Most of the students leaving public education in N.O. are doing so because of failing this test.
2. There exists a need not only in Orleans but throughout Louisiana to not reinvent the wheel and to stop the “save old song”. We have programs that work but they never get funded due to politics. “If there is no problem within, then the outside can do us no harm!”.
3. The quick and effective adoption and implementation of these recommendations.
4. Strategic planning as next step and public support for implementation.
5. Kids growing up with the brain disorder fetal alcohol spectrum disorders often are in trouble with the law. They also often end up in homeless shelters. We must prevent this syndrome, offer supportive services and supervised apartments to affected persons so they can live ordinary lives in our community.
6. I urge you to adopt the recommendations of the Casey findings. The state should begin immediately by closing a juvenile correctional facility and using the money to place youth in residential group homes, etc. The state should use the existing resources they currently contract with. Families should be served and parenting classes are needed. There is a need to place youth in treatment facilities in order to improve conditions and reduce recidivisms. Stop sending youth to parishes far away from their parish of residence.
7. Children are special, also vulnerable. Juvenile justice system hinders and harms, not rehabilitated. Children are not being adequately represented, instead brutalized. Society’s programs are being blamed on children. There is no accountability. System needs urgent reforms now. One or more incarceration facility needs to be closed.
8. Racism among us. Racial profiling against children of African descent.
9. Keep up the good work, we appreciate the New Orleans’ Delegation and committee members. Support the work of the Advisory Board.
10. I feel the word juvenile should be re-defined by the state of Louisiana. I feel 17 yr. Olds should not be interrogated for any crime without proper representation. How can a child waive his or her rights? There should be an adult or parent present.

11. In regards to public awareness, I am a marketing executive at Clear Channel Radio of New Orleans. We have access to the entire community with our (7) radio stations. We are trained on a daily basis to reach targeted demographics. I can help to effectively and efficiently reach the community. On a personal note, we must look at the retention factor of the LAP test which is pushing our youth out of school.

**LIST OF OTHER MATERIALS
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