



Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County

616 ADAMS AVENUE • MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38105

DAN H. MICHAEL
JUDGE

October 22, 2018

Chairman Van Turner
Shelby County Commission
160 N. Main St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Dear Chairman Turner,

As you are aware, on October 19, 2018, the United States terminated the Memorandum of Agreement with the the County and the Juvenile Court upon its finding that, through laudable reforms and efforts, the County has achieved and appropriately maintained substantial compliance with the Agreement. For that reason, the United States determined that termination of the Memorandum of Agreement and oversight by the Department of Justice should end so that control over continued juvenile justice reform would rest with the elected local officials responsible for protecting and securing the constitutional and civil rights of all members of the community.

Over the past six years, the Department of Justice has encouraged and guided those of us who work at Juvenile Court in developing a model for accountability, review, reform, and transparency. There are two key components, both of which already exist and were developed in collaboration with the Department of Justice:

- 1) The Strategic Planning Committee
- 2) The Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium

A. The Strategic Planning Committee

The Committee is comprised of the following internal stakeholders:

- 1) Administrator of the Juvenile Court
- 2) Deputy Administrator of Disproportionate Minority Contact
- 3) Research Specialist/Analyst of the Juvenile Court
- 4) Disproportionate Minority Contact Compliance Officer
- 5) Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) Coordinator
- 6) Sheriff's Office Chief of the Shelby County Juvenile Detention Center

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7) Assistant County Attorney

Additionally, the following offices may provide input, as requested by the committee:

- 1) Special Assistant to the Judge of Juvenile Court
- 2) Outside statistical consultant retained by Shelby County

The Strategic Planning Committee has the following responsibilities towards reducing disproportionate minority contact and participating in community outreach, both in sharing information with the community and in providing feedback to the community on any questions or concerns that are raised:

- 1) Meet monthly (or more often when needed) to discuss the array of efforts to reduce DMC, such as reviewing policies and procedures and creating resource guides containing lists of programs (with details and locations in the community);
- 2) Continue to work with any community stakeholders who have expertise in reducing DMC and can provide assistance with reducing DMC;
- 3) Employ outside statistical experts when deemed necessary to assist the Committee in reviewing and analyzing numbers and trends related to DMC;
- 4) Produce a report of its monthly meeting;
- 5) Plan and hold regular meetings in the community to keep the community updated on issues and programs involving juvenile justice and DMC;
- 6) Continue to maintain publicly accessible documents on the Juvenile Court Data Dashboard;
- 7) Provide a copy of the Committee's report to the Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium to educate parents and the community about the latest initiatives and reforms involving the juvenile justice system;
- 8) Continue to work with JDAI and improve detention alternatives;
- 9) Continue to work with the State District Attorney to reduce the number of juvenile transfers to adult court; and
- 10) Identify programs, assess them, and revise them (where needed) for the purpose of reducing DMC (this includes considerations of how often certain programs are used, eligibility requirements, and recidivism/success rates).

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B. The Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium

The CJC is the external community outreach program made up of key stakeholders from outside of Shelby County government. It includes seven mayoral appointments (approved by the Commission) and six appointments made from the Juvenile Justice Board. The CJC shall be comprised of members who reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the County and should include, if possible, no less than two parents of children who have had delinquency matters before the Court, at least one person who has had direct contact with the juvenile justice system, and community advocates who are directly involved in improving the juvenile justice system.

As is already the case, the CJC shall enjoy the benefit of having an assistant county attorney assigned to provide legal support (when requested) and a paralegal to assure that the CJC's website is properly updated. The CJC shall also enjoy the benefit of having the Deputy Administrator of the Court attend its meetings and provide support where possible.

The CJC shall have the following responsibilities toward maintaining a direct line of communication with the Court about community concerns related to the juvenile justice system, researching and educating themselves about those concerns, and providing feedback to the community in a manner that encourages transparency and continued improvements in the juvenile justice system.

- 1) Regularly attend monthly meetings and public feedback meetings scheduled by the CJC;
- 2) Maintain an attendance roster and minutes of its meetings and ensure that these documents are accessible on its website;
- 3) Revise and adopt existing bylaws and sustaining documents applicable to the CJC in a manner that facilitates its goals;
- 4) Ensure that all bylaws and sustaining documents are accessible on its website;
- 5) Receive and review reports from the Strategic Planning Committee and submit questions and/or feedback to the Court as deemed necessary by the CJC;

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- 6) Conduct at least two annual public feedback meetings and attend other public meetings that touch upon juvenile justice to encourage a continued dialogue about the juvenile justice system and any improvements that the community seeks or recommends;
- 7) Create a report of any public feedback meetings with questions to the Court and submit these reports to the Court in a timely fashion;
- 8) Maintain the privacy of citizens who request confidentiality in their communications with the CJC;
- 9) Suggest change or reforms to the Court that, as a body, the CJC believes would serve the best interests of juveniles who have contact with the Court; and
- 10) Ensure that any reports by the CJC, along with any responses by the Court, are accessible on the CJC's website.

Please feel free to contact me if you, or the Commission, have any questions about how we are continuing to maintain and build upon the accomplishments that have already taken place here at Juvenile Court.



Honorable Dan H. Michael
Juvenile Court of Memphis & Shelby County Judge