



**Board of Juvenile Justice &
Board of Education
Joint Meeting
Thursday, October 28, 2021
Decatur, GA
Board Meeting Minutes
DJJ Central Office and via Audio/Zoom Conference**

Opening Remarks

On Thursday, October 28, 2021. Chair Sandra Taylor called the meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice to order at 10:02 AM. The meeting was held at DJJ Central Office and via audio/Zoom conference for those who could not attend in person.

DJJ Staff Present: Commissioner Tyrone Oliver, Deputy Superintendent Zane Shelfer, DJJ Executive Team Members, and various DJJ Staff Members.

Attendees included: Assistant Attorney General Amy Radley (in person) and public guests (remote attendance).

Invocation: Chaplain Danny Horne

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Board Member Gary Yandura.

Roll Call: Members present were Chair Sandra Taylor (in-person), Vice-Chair Willie C. Bolton (via Zoom), Secretary Adam Kennedy (via Zoom), Chief Gary Yandura (in-person), Penny Penn (via Zoom), Thomas Coleman (in-person), Joyette Holmes (via Zoom), Kathryn Powers (via Zoom), Danny L. Blackmon (in-person) and Timothy McCulley (in-person), and John Edwards (via Zoom). Judicial Advisory Council Member Judge Quintress Gilbert participated (in-person). Quorum was declared.

Agenda approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve October 28, 2021 agenda. The motion was made by Board Member Blackmon, seconded by Board Member Coleman, and approved unanimously.

Minutes approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2021 board meeting. The motion was made by Board Member Yandura, seconded by Board Member Holmes, and approved unanimously.

Chair Taylor opened the meeting by expressing her condolences to Board Member Angie Holt for the passing of her brother and Board Member Fred Stephens for the passing of his wife, Laura.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Oliver began his report by expressing his condolences to the Board Members who recently lost loved ones.

COVID-19 Update

Commissioner Oliver updated the Board regarding the number of DJJ staff members and youth who tested positive for COVID-19. He thanked the DJJ staff members for continuing to follow safety protocols to minimize exposure risk.

Human Resources (HR) Update

The Commissioner provided the agency's current vacancy rate. He stated that after addressing exit interviews, most employees leave the agency due to salary amount. He also congratulated the Basic Juvenile Correctional Officer Training (BJCOT) class. The cadets who were sworn in as Juvenile Correctional Officers (JCO) at the DJJ Training Academy on October 22, 2021.

Employee Engagement Survey

The Commissioner talked about the Employee Engagement Survey (EES) Action Card. The purpose of the action card is to provide information on the programs and procedures implemented in response to the department's 2020 EES. The expected outcome of these action items will ultimately address the concerns of DJJ employees while improving the agency's workplace environment. He also announced that employees would be asked to participate in another EES in November. The objective of the survey is to gather feedback to help DJJ's leadership better understand and improve employee morale, turnover rate, and the overall agency culture.

Divisional Report

Board of Education (BOE) – Data DashBoard

Deputy Superintendent Zane Shelfer shared information about the education data dashboard, including the percentage of the student body with special education needs. DJJ is currently in the process of setting up interviews to fill vacant positions.

Questions (BOE)

Secretary Kennedy asked about any challenges caused by the job vacancies.

Chair Taylor asked if the youth are being assessed for special education once they are in the secure facilities or whether they have already been diagnosed.

Federal Programs

Deputy Superintendent Shelfer introduced Director of Special Education Winifred Pierce and Federal Programs Coordinator Robbin Dickerson. They discussed the multiple federal grants the school systems receive from the Department of Education (DOE), which approves all budgets. The federal grants process includes Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) and Schoolwide/School Improvement Plans.

Questions/Comments (Federal Programs)

Secretary Kennedy asked if it's feasible for only one Parent Mentor to cover the entire state of Georgia.

Chair Taylor asked about the "Check and Connect Program." She also wanted to know if the Georgia Preparatory Academy (GPA) online is available to students under community supervision with DJJ.

Board Member Coleman commended the Education team members for their great work.

Judicial Advisory Council Member Gilbert asked if the federal funds carry over if unused.

Board Member Edwards asked if reading programs are listed under the grants.

Wellness Program "Transforming U"

Director of Victim and Volunteer Services Debaja Coleman gave insight on the DJJ Wellness Program "Transforming U." She also talked about one of the first challenges, "Walking Towards Wellness." The challenge was kicked off on July 1 and ended on September 30th. A total of 215 employees from across the department participated. On October 1, 2021, the agency held a wellness celebration to acknowledge participation in the challenge.

Association of Women Executives in Corrections (AWEC)

Assistant Deputy Commissioner Susan Miller presented on the DJJ youth's participation at the AWEC conference. The conference was held from October 7-10, 2021, in Savannah, GA. The conference's goal is to provide tools, strategies, and resources that will help empower women who work in a correctional environment and enable them to identify and strengthen their leadership qualities. A total of twenty female leaders from DJJ attended the conference. Four female youth from the secure facilities were also invited to discuss their experiences in the youth detention center and their life stories. The youth were also able to highlight their craft creations in a silent auction.

Questions/Comments (WWICJJ)

Chair Taylor commended AD Commissioner Miller for her great presentation.

Comments: Chair Taylor encouraged the Board Members to attend the upcoming Board of Education training.

Old Business: No new business.

New Business: No new business.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting will be December 9, 2021, at 10:00 AM, DJJ Central Office, Decatur, GA, and via audio/Zoom conference.

The motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Blackmon and seconded by Secretary Kennedy, and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 AM.

Sandra H. Taylor, Chair
Board of Juvenile Justice

Tyrone Oliver, Commissioner
Department of Juvenile Justice

Adam Kennedy, Secretary
Board of Juvenile Justice