

**Iowa Girls Justice Initiative  
Meeting Summary  
September 9, 2016  
10:00am – 2:00 pm**



**Polk County River Place – Room 3A  
2309 Euclid Ave.  
Des Moines, IA**

**Working Group Members**

Ashley Artzer, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Terri Bailey, *Achieving Maximum Potential Facilitator*  
Jim Chesnik, *Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Adult, Children, & Family Services*  
Kristen Corey, *Iowa Department of Human Rights*  
Steve Crew, *Iowa Department of Education*  
Kim Denning, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Andrea Dickerson, *Youth and Shelter Services, Inc.*  
Ruth Frush, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Evelyn Garrison, *Achieving Maximum Potential Facilitator*  
Nicole Hart, *Achieving Maximum Potential*  
Jeremy Kaiser, *Scott County Juvenile Detention*  
Nathan Kirstein, *Disability Rights Iowa*  
Julie Martin, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Steve Michael, *Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning*  
Kristie Oliver, *The Coalition for Children and Family Services*  
Lori Rinehart, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Tom Southard, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Monica Stone, *Iowa Department of Human Rights*  
Jennifer Tibbets, *ITFYW Chair and Catherine McAuley Center*  
Patti Wachtendorf, *Iowa Correctional Institution for Women*

**Guests**

Jen Sievert, on behalf of Iowa Coalition for Family and Children's Services  
Ron Hickman, on behalf of Clarinda Academy  
Haley Pederson

**Staff**

Gracie Brandsgard, *SPPG*  
Arlinda McKeen, *SPPG*  
Kathy Nesteby, *Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning*

## **Welcome and Overview of the Day**

The meeting began at 10:12am. Arlinda McKeen welcomed the group and thanked Tom Southard, who is retiring in the fall, for his service to the working group. McKeen reviewed the day's agenda with the working group, which included discussion of recommendations and other plan content. McKeen reminded the group that this process has, and will continue to be, a consensus-driven process, and encouraged the members to reflect on the work of the group leading up to this meeting and to keep the future of the girls involved in the juvenile justice system at the forefront of the discussions.

## **Recommendation and Detail for Deep End Girls – Discussion and Consensus**

The working group reviewed the list of recommendations and discussed each individually to come to a consensus as a group on the content of each recommendation.

### Specialized Foster Homes

- Specialized foster homes seem more like a service than a systems change.
  - Was this recommendation built off of the pilot project of JCS?
    - Yes, that's what sparked the discussion.
  - I think it's systems-based because we don't have it in our system right now. But it could go either way.
  - It is system related because we need to develop it within our system. The specialized foster homes would result in services but they need to be developed in the system first.
  - Services relate more towards the service needed for deep end girls, and would be specific to the location for deep end girls.
  - Is the focus more oriented to having girls in a residential placement or is it that we see foster homes as the placement?
    - It depends on the girl and on their situation. There's a continuum of care that both foster homes and a residential placement are a part of.
- It says specialized foster homes would be used as a step down strategy – would they also be used as a step before?
  - Yes

### Female-Responsiveness

- We need something in the recommendations that explicitly lays out that the treatment and programs available should be female-responsive.
  - In this room it's a given that services would be female-responsive, but we need to spell it out in our report for our audiences.
  - Create a separate category called "Basic Principles" where we can introduce these ideas and include chief components.
    - And you should be looking through these lenses as you're reading each recommendation.

- We can't say it enough times. Those reading this don't know about female responsive so the more we say it, the better.
- Propose adding to the single gender environment to read "Adopt a female responsive approach to services including single gender environments, etc."
- If it's not in the bullets it'll get lost.

### Recommendations and Report Structure

- What are the recommendations supposed to accomplish?
  - This is the core of the report.
  - Almost all of these apply more broadly. Are we talking about recommendations for all girls or for a more specific group?
- I see the recommendations as being very clear and concrete. They need to be because they're going to decision makers. If we're recommending a no eject, no reject place, that needs to be at the top of the list. That's what they're going to want to know, what the placement looks like and what we need to do to make it happen.
  - That's missing from the recommendations.
  - This was only agreed upon at the last meeting so we need to include language about a placement in the recommendations and we just haven't done that yet.
  - The number one recommendation should be to establish a Girls Academy. We should use that language so people aren't thinking state training school.
- There wasn't consensus on creating a Girls Academy, there was consensus that we needed a place. The specifics would be left up to the decision makers, but the recommendations in the services category would be specific to that place.
  - The service recommendations need to come first because that's the priority because there is nowhere for these girls to go. Then tackle the systems changes to improve the system.
  - Can we call it a highest level of service or care instead of placement or Girls Academy?
  - It's really just for the dozen girls and that's what the decision makers going to get caught up with – that the most money is being spent on the fewest number of girls.
- Should there be service recommendations within the first few system recommendations? The Academy could be the first system recommendation, and then the service recommendations are listed as service recommendations for the Academy. And then we can say that we'll tackle the others later.
- The first recommendation needs to be a continuum of services and care. That's the number one thing we're trying to do is to create levels of services and then ensure that our assessments are accurate to ensure the girls are receiving proper services.
- The systems recommendations do broaden out, and they should. Those support the deep end girls at all parts of the system.
- Add something about a place to the recommendations. Make sure that's at the top so it's the first thing they're seeing. Then go right into the systems recommendations. Then the service recommendations. And include language on the ripple effect of helping deep end girls.

- How would the placement be different from Forest Ridge or Four Oaks?
  - We want the resources that are applied to the boys to be applied to the deep end girls.
  - If the girl has this designation then they get additional dollars that follow them wherever they go.
- The services recommendations serve only the few girls that meet the state training school eligibility Code language. The systems recommendations are broader and serve those girls that are included in the deep-end girls definition.
- MCOs are rejecting the numbers of kids going to PMICs. How might that affect the numbers, and could that lead to an increase in deep-end girls who need a placement? Other residential programs are addressing this because the numbers are really increasing. Does this group want or need to address that?
  - This could go under the Context portion of the report.
  - That should not mean we build a larger facility.

### Placement

- We can list in our recommendations that we should limit the number of beds in the placement.
- We should outline that the deep end girls should be separated from non-deep end girls. The best practice would be having a separate placement; the boys have that.
- We need to clearly define which girls are going to the placement. That would show the need for a specific place with highly specific services. That these girls would wreak havoc on any other placement that doesn't have highly therapeutic services.

### Systems Recommendation #3

- Make "education credits easily identifiable and transferable." Get rid of "from one school district to the next." They're losing their credits when they go to placements, they don't lose the credits transferring schools. It's when they're being taken out of a traditional school that we lose the credits.
  - That's included in ESSA so it might be in the process of being changed at the federal level. We'll need to see where the loopholes are.
    - It would be great to be ahead of the curve on this, too.
- It's the school district's or AEA's responsibility to transfer the credits, it's not the facility's responsibility.
  - A lot of times the school districts do not want to work with the student coming back into their district. They're losing credits when they go back to their district in their transition back into the community. They shouldn't have to sit out of school.
  - That's why we need to make the credits easily identifiable. Because districts can have difficulty matching up credits. Some districts have semesters, trimesters, and quarters. Some do block scheduling; some don't.
- Things get lost in translation all the time. We should say "facilities in school districts" so we can list that it's not just school district to district, sometimes it's placement to placement or school district to placement.

- The “develop and implement uniform basic education requirements” is already in law and they already exist. As Iowa Core and others. I think we can change to have a consistent number of credits needed to graduate. That’s where things get messed up between schools that do semester, trimesters, and quarters. Sixty credits might be the minimum for graduation.
  - Add “adhere to standard diploma requirements”?
  - We need a standard way of determining whether someone has graduated.
- There is no State of Iowa Diploma.

#### Service Based Recommendations

- Super PMICs, or secure PMICs, is the opposite direction that the state is going. We should also define what a Super PMIC is.
- Public safety and level of security is not listed in the recommendations.
  - Can we address it as safety of the community and safety of other girls in placements? They are two separate things.
  - Money and public safety will be the two things that get the reader’s attention.

#### Education

- Add in something about requiring partnerships between vocational programs in placements and community colleges that have certification programs.
- Take out “and access to same curriculum of the district” from the innovation section. That should be covered in initiation that says they’ll get access to appropriate curriculum. You could be potentially limiting the curriculum the girls receive based on the school district where the placement is, such as Mormon Trail versus Des Moines Public Schools.
- Change initiation to “access to education designed to keep them on grade level”.
- What does “same type of curricula” mean? Change to “ensure access to commensurate curricula”.

#### Access and Eligibility

- You can stay at the state training school if the judge’s orders are put in after the age of 17 years if you have a program you need to finish or to complete your education requirements. You’d then have until 19½. That can be court ordered 30 days prior to the child turning 18.
  - This came out of the discussion about preventing them from bumping up to the adult system.
  - There’s a Code section this refers to.
- Who’s the study group? It would be a legislative body if it’s a Code change.
- We could say that at the time of the state training school it had 20 beds but it only averaged 10-12 girls at any one time. That would give a more realistic picture.
- Should we require CJP to convene a work group? That would give CJP the choice to get the right people on the group and that would give us a little more control.
  - It would make it more objective than giving it to JCS.

### Mental Health

- Why do we need super PMICs?
  - We should not confuse a PMIC with the level of care and placement we're looking at for deep end girls.
  - Super PMICs can be used as a place to send girls at the Girls Academy if they need stabilization in mental health crises.
- The initiation level sounds like the service level and the innovative recommendation sounds like a systems level.
- Take out "super PMICs" and replace with "acute mental health"? Access to an "acute mental health stabilization setting".
- Add "universal access".
  - There's access already, you need to make sure there's dedicated beds or a no reject, no eject for deep end girls. Getting them to dedicate beds is unlikely.
  - Access and response are critical components.
- Take out a mention of the University of Iowa – we might be closing the door on options we don't know about.
- Do we want to make sure resources are there to allow the state training school-like facility to address serious mental health crises at the facility rather than sending them off?
  - There's work being done now to do this at the boy's state training school.

### Oversight

- Can we suggest different types of standards and regulations? We can say we want it to be accredited but we don't specify by whom. We want to lead them towards a path that's less correctional.
- Do we need a third party?
  - Yes, that's best practice.
  - One of the problems at Toledo was that there was little oversight.
  - There's concern about funding for yet another oversight body.
- We almost need a licensure process where they go in once a year and there are very clear regulations.
  - There needs to be a way to enforce those standards.
- DHS makes regulations for each type of facility, DIA holds the licenses.
- The innovative level could be layering on a gender responsive assessment tool, etc.

### Family Engagement

- The argument for having multiple facilities would make it easier for families to visit girls.
  - How would that work either emotionally and financially if you have multiple facilities that could result in only one girl being in a particular unit?
- Or set up transportation for families.
  - Missouri has set of vans at the setting that can pick up families and bring them to the facility.

- Forest Ridge and Clarinda will sometimes bring kids to the families or to a halfway meeting point.
- Allow teletherapy for families who are in dysfunctional settings – initiation idea.
  - Pretty easy to set up now.
  - Family can come to a probation office weekly.
- Innovative idea: bring the family to the child, like a Ronald McDonald house setting for the weekend.
  - Could you combine the specialized foster home idea with this?
- Initiation: ensure access to family team decision making and youth team decision making facilitation.
- There's a need for support even after the child's case is closed to ensure long-term success.
  - Add a family aftercare component.
  - That would be very cost-effective too.

### Funding

- This is funding specific to the location, to the Girls Academy.
- Move the language from the innovation to the initiation step.
- The recommendation under Innovation should be that there will be something in place that will ensure that we never have this situation again.
- Agencies should be paid for the good work they're doing so they can reinvest into their programs.
  - "Pay for innovation".
  - Need both evidence-based and innovative practices.
- Come up with a way to do standard budgeting because that would allow programs to actually have a budget, instead of doing the funding per head – needs to make this clear.
  - Funding structure would need to be like that of a state training school.
  - Would provide stability for providers.
- There's a massive research lag for girls in the juvenile justice system.
  - There are limited numbers of best practices for girls.
  - Maybe this is a funding opportunity?
- Funding should be under the systems category too.
  - Instead we've added it into each recommendation.
  - A sustainability issue for girls programming is the low numbers. If it's a flat budget, it makes it easier to make the programs work.
- Strengthening reimbursements to provide greater off-ramp success without broadening the net.
- Discussion of reimbursements for detention centers.
- Initiation should be what can we do today? And should innovative be what can we do in 5 years?
- Treatment is missing out of these recommendations.
  - Or is it interwoven into all of them?
  - Yes, but we need more specific details.

### Assessment

- It's not unreasonable to see a moderate-risk, high-need girl suited for the Girls Academy. I didn't want to close the door on this possibility.
  - Moderate and high risk can both be included. It would be a way to avoid a waiver for a moderate-risk girl to the adult system.
- Add the long form?
- Add that it needs to be based on current risk. Sometimes the risk assessment could be off because the girl hasn't had a new assessment recently.
  - That's the direction it's moving.

### Single Gender Environment

- Does this apply to staff too?
  - No.
  - The innovation part might be an all-female staff.
- Allows them to be strong with themselves and with other women.
  - They need to be able to focus on themselves and their needs.
- Change the header to "Treatment Modalities" and single gender environment would go under that.
  - And we can add in substance abuse treatment, etc. and others.

### Professional Training

- Add "initial and ongoing". Move the last sentence from innovative up to the initiation.
- What's the most basic level of training they're expected to have? And what's the gold star level?
- Make the training competency-based.
- 1. Family Foster Care
  - Are we laying out specific trainings they need to go through?
  - For high-risk, high-need girls it should be residential-level training.
  - There should be additional funds.
  - Is there a way to identify foster parents who are willing to take girls and then offer them specific female-responsive trainings?
    - This would be the initiation step.
  - Change from specialized to contracted or therapeutic because there are already other specialized foster homes.
- 2. Court Processing
  - Instead of track can we come up with minimum expectations or standards?
    - Tracking would enforce the minimums?
    - Private attorneys already doing that for billing.
    - There's been fraud with this because the tracking is self-reporting.
    - A report to the court, while still self-reporting, is something and needs to be reported to a judge.



- Working group member Nathan Kirstein offered to come up with language for this recommendation and provide it to staff before the next meeting.
- Move Girls Court to initiation or take it out altogether and emphasize it separately.
  - That's not a realistic expectation for rural areas.
    - If you did it for both moderate and high risk/need girls it would be more feasible for a Girls Court in rural areas.
  - That's why it's in the innovative step.
  - There are components that could be moved to the initiation step.
    - Working group member Lori Rinehart offered to come up with language for this recommendation and provide it to staff before the next meeting.
  - We should ask for additional funding for Girls Courts.
- 3. Education
  - Move language from other Education section over here too.
- 4. Access and Eligibility
  - Difference between initiation and innovative is the funding piece.
- 5. Assessment
  - Concern that in the initiation step it's stronger than the innovative step which just says "give preference".
    - There's a difference between validating a tool by race and gender and having it being female and culturally responsive.
  - Working group member Kristie Oliver offered to come up with language for this recommendation and provide it to the staff before the next meeting.
- 6. Professional Training
  - Initiation making it available, innovative is paying for it.

### **Closing Comments**

McKeen thanked the working group members for their thoughtful discussion and feedback. Next month's meeting will move the group further towards determining the structure of the final plan. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

**Next Iowa Girls Justice Initiative Working Group meeting is October 7, 2016, at River Place, 2309 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines.**