

Washtenaw Equity Partnership (WEP) Youth Justice & Schools Subcommittee Inaugural Meeting

February 1, 2022 12:00-1:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Peri Stone-Palmquist (Co-Chair)
S. Joy Gaines (Co-Chair)
Kathryne O'Grady
Karen Field
Dr. Maisie Lee Gholson
Chief Jerrod Hart
Judge Julia Owdziej
Rod Wallace
Nancy Wheeler
Anthony Williamson
Jamall Bufford
Simone Strong
Jeannette Hadden
Nichollette Hoard
Lynwood Powell
Ché Carter
Jimmie Wilson, Jr.
Alma Wheeler Smith (WEP Co-Chair)
Alex Roth (Vera)
Liz Swavola (Vera)

- Co-chairs welcome everyone and thank them for their participation
- Members identify themselves
- Background on WEP from Co-Chair, Alma Wheeler Smith
 - A small group came together in August 2020 to change the racial equity pattern in the criminal legal system; included courts, public defender's office, prosecutor's office, and members of CREW (Citizens for Racial Equity in Washtenaw County)
 - Applied for a grant from the Michigan Justice Fund to bring together government and community to plan innovative ways to create equity
 - Excited about this subcommittee in particular because involvement with system can begin at an early age
 - [Guiding Principles](#) were shared as part of welcome package
 - We are going to look at quantitative and qualitative data to analyze whether we have achieved new parameters that we set for the criminal legal system
 - We will evaluate the system as it is impacting our community and if it is not working, we will have a basis on which to make change
 - Want to break down silos with a vast array of perspectives
 - Looking for innovation, open-mindedness, creativity, including from those who work in the system

- Wish you great luck with your project
- Vera Intro
 - WEP Working Group is the steering committee for the entire project
 - 6 subcommittees: (1) Front end and Prevention, (2) Court process, (3) Post-sentencing and Reentry, (4) Youth Justice and Schools, (5) Behavioral Health, and (6) Data
 - WEP will compile a plan at the end, but subcommittees will do a deep dive and research to make recommendations to WEP
 - Vera founded in 1961 – national nonprofit
 - Technical assistance and advocacy
 - Vera will help with research and administrative tasks, like scheduling
 - Alex and Liz are the two Vera staff members who will be supporting this subcommittee
 - Vera team really wants this to be driven by you all, the experts in your own community and experiences
 - We have started the process to get administrative data from adult courts and sheriff's office
 - Overlap with other projects – Dr. Joe Ryan (Univ. of Michigan, School of Social Work) working on juvenile court data, project with prosecutor's office, and Eastern Michigan University studying traffic stops
- Questions and comments
 - What did Vera do in Wayne County; was it the same as this project?
 - Vera did convene a task force that included government and community in Wayne County. The project was focused on reducing the number of people in jail in the county. This project, however, is fairly unprecedented in that it focuses on racial and ethnic disparities across the entire adult and juvenile legal systems.
 - Saline Police is launching a transparency tool about traffic stops in the near future.
 - How do we think about the research, for example, will there be pilots, and what happens next with the recommendations?
 - We may be able to implement some quick wins, but it could be more difficult to implement a pilot in the short-term. Can definitely recommend a pilot to WEP. We will keep the public informed and will get public support and buy-in as we go.
 - Subcommittee members feel urgency about not just making recommendations but bringing about actual change.
 - What happens with the data?
 - Vera will analyze court and jail data and share findings with WEP and subcommittees for additional analysis. We can invite other researchers who are analyzing agency data to present as well. The subcommittee should think about other data that would be helpful for its work.
 - Can we bring in experts from the schools and courts about what's currently happening in order to understand programs?
 - An important question to understand what we know and what's happening now.
 - Helpful to start from that point.
 - Helpful to hear from judges. Historical and current perspectives.
 - Missing someone from early education, who understands early brain development.
 - Important to think about impact of COVID on institutions and schools.

- Chief Hart is willing to pilot at his department. The department has learned a lot about mental and behavioral health and has been partnering with community mental health. It doesn't see the same volume as other departments, but committed.
- Can think of the process in two ways: look for easy to implement ideas and then things that will take longer.
- We shouldn't make this about individual children and how they are broken, but how the system is broken – need someone who takes a sociological perspective; recognize that something is wrong with the system.
- Open to recommendations for others who should be at the table, both subcommittee members and experts for presentations – please review the current list of subcommittee members.
- Review of [Subcommittee Charge](#)
- Ideas for who could present at next meeting to help understand current context or should join the subcommittee
 - Dr. Joe Ryan
 - Someone from early education
 - Director of detention center
 - Someone from restorative justice in the schools
 - Director of Dedicated to Make a Change
 - Someone with a broad perspective on being aware of ableism and health, maybe a pediatrician/someone in public health
 - Community Mental Health
 - Liz Spring, Stacey Doyle (works with detained population), Darnisha Pickens, Daicia Price, Leah Mills [Liz and Daicia are on the prevention subcommittee]
 - Caution to keep the group manageable; some can be experts, but not necessarily members
 - Be deliberate about bringing in perspectives of youth
- Will share list of invitees with this group to see who was invited and might not be able to participate
- Voting
 - Minutes – yes/no
 - Recommendations – fist to five (see image below)
- Meetings
 - Consensus around meeting monthly; and this time generally works (first Tuesday)
 - May need some special meetings up front as gathering background info.; could record these for those who can't join
 - 12:00-1:30 is usually good
- Stipends
 - You will qualify if you make \$50,000 or less and/or work for an organization with budget of \$350,000 or less (\$1800)
 - Smaller amounts to be determined for experts/research participants
 - Email Alma if interested: almawsmith@gmail.com
- Next steps
 - Presentations about what's happening right now – including current experiences of youth
 - Send co-chairs/Vera recommendations, including yourself, and any data you can share
 - Judge Owdziej volunteers for presenting at next meeting

- Fill out [the doodle poll](#) to schedule our next meeting, please

Fist to Five Voting



0 I disagree and block



1 I disagree but won't block



2 I disagree but will go along



3 In the middle



4 This is fine



5 Yes! And I'm ready to work