



STATE ADVISORY GROUP ON YOUTH JUSTICE: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

August 24, 2026

1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Physical Location:

925 L Street, Suite 1275
Sacramento, CA 95814

Virtual Public Participant Link:

[Via Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 161 623 7296 | Password: 605558

Welcome and Roll Call (1:00 P.M.-1:10 P.M.)

Facilitator: Jessica Ellis

I. Meeting started at 1:05 P.M.

- a. Co-Chair Ellis conducted Roll Call

II. Roll Call

- a. The following State Advisory Group on Youth Justice (SAG YJ) Restorative Justice (RJ) Subcommittee members were in attendance

- Victoria Birch, Youth Advisory Board Member, OYCR
- Jessica Ellis, Executive Director of Centinela Youth Services and Co-Chair of the RJ Subcommittee
- Kent Mendoza, Associate Director of Local Advocacy of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) and Chair of the RJ Subcommittee
- Efrain Morales, Program Manager of 3Strands Global Foundation
- Greg Srolestar, Director of Research and Tech Assistance with Prosecutors Alliance
- Sheri Wiedenhofer, Executive Director of the Community Justice Center

- b. The following SAG YJ RJ Subcommittee members were not in attendance

- Julie Hilt, Founder of the Alternative Restorative Communities (ARC)
- Javier Stauring, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Healing Dialogue in Action
- Don Carney, Executive Director of Youth Transforming Justice
- Rodrigo Jimenez, Associate Director with Youth Alliance
- Allannah Tomich, Executive Director with Yolo Conflict Resolution Center

- c. The following Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) staff were in attendance:

- Protima Pandey, Chief Legal Counsel
- Krystal Lewis, Federal Title II Program Manager

- Cecilia Arredondo Simmons, County Liaison Analyst
- Austin Dickman, County Liaison Analyst

Co-Chair Mendoza welcomed Austin and thanked Cecilia for supporting the subcommittee.

Co-Chair Ellis informed the subcommittee that Member Clarke from Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) has left her position and is no longer part of the subcommittee. She asked members to connect the subcommittee with potential members.

Approve August Minutes (1:10 P.M.-1:15 P.M.)

Facilitator: Chair Kent Mendoza

- I. Co-Chair Ellis motioned to approve the [July minutes](#) and Co-Chair Mendoza seconded. All members voted to approve the minutes. The July meeting minutes were approved.

Next Steps for Subcommittee (1:15 P.M.-2:10 P.M.)

Facilitator: Co-Chair Jessica Ellis

- I. Co-Chair Ellis discussed next steps for the Title II Plan. Compiled notes on recommendations. Main points:
 - 1) Defining clearly
 - a. Member Wiedenhoefer liked RJ definition
 - b. Member Srolestar shared that 'community-based' is controversial, but preferred. Non-punitive term a bit vague.
 - i. Member Wiedenhoefer agreed that RJ largely occurs in the punitive system, but not a punitive approach.
 - c. Co-Chair Mendoza asked the subcommittee to think where RJ starts and recommended that it needs to be neutral in its starting point. RJ starts with harm that occurred, not necessarily from the position of one of the parties.
 - i. Co-Chair Ellis affirmed that RJ is neutral – not offender vs. victim.
 - d. Member Morales shared that there are various RJ definitions, but definition shared seems to the point. Asked what the purpose of defining is.
 - i. Co-Chair Ellis said that the subcommittee will share this information with SAG YJ and advise body how to incorporate RJ into Title II Plan. Good to acknowledge variation in definition though.
 - e. Co-Chair Mendoza reiterated that the subcommittee will educate SAG YJ on RJ. Asked how accountability fits in because RJ is part of a punitive process.
 - 2) Alignment with core principles
 - a. Co-Chair Ellis went through core principles and elicited feedback from members.
 - b. Co-Chair Mendoza emphasized that we shouldn't 'sugar coat' RJ and discussing crime and victimization. Definition needs to be truthful.
 - i. Member Wiedenhoefer appreciated comment and honest dialogue.
 - c. Co-Chair Ellis focused on punitive term and lack of learn from behavior.
 - i. Co-Chair Mendoza liked idea to focus on behavior change.
 - ii. Member Efrain said that RJ is not intended to be punitive and is about accountability.

- d. Co-Chair Ellis discussed voluntary nature of RJ and distinction between RJ and restorative practices.
 - i. Member Efrain shared that probation would refer youth to RJ programs. Is referral coerced?
 - ii. Co-Chair Ellis said as long as denying to participate in RJ doesn't affect sentencing or add on additional penalties, referral is not coerced.
- e. Co-Chair Mendoza asked question around outside actors participating in RJ.
 - i. Co-Chair Ellis shared that a judge can never be the mediator in RJ and will not set restitution cost.
 - ii. Member Srolestar asked what the space is for surrogate voice.
- f. OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, reminded the subcommittee that it isn't tasked with defining terms, especially with RJ practices not institutionalized in law. However, shared [AB 60](#) which could help guide principles. Appreciated subcommittee members adding input based on experience. Reaching consensus could be difficult and a strict definition could limit options.
- g. Co-Chair Ellis shared that some folks are co-opting definition of RJ. Only four approaches that are known. Wanted to find middle ground of not being too strict but carving out clear space. Need to get at meaningful accountability piece.

3) Where to use RJ

- a. Co-Chair Ellis reminded the subcommittee on discussion last meeting and vote to focus on diversion.
- b. Co-Chair Ellis stated all pathways RJ could be used. Asked for feedback.
- c. Member Birch emphasized desire to have RJ throughout all points.

4) Funding

- a. Co-Chair Ellis asked what subcommittee members would add to Title II Plan regarding RJ.
- b. Co-Chair Mendoza expressed need for more funding to incorporate RJ throughout system, especially prioritizing at the beginning to divert as many youth as possible. Shared need to look at patterns of arrest to intervene before system involvement.
- c. Co-Chair Ellis asked how Title II Plan should direct funding for RJ (e.g. send to existing/known organizations or counties with no existing).
 - i. Co-Chair Mendoza proposed more regional approach so counties can assist one another.
 - ii. Member Morales shared that some counties don't have RJ and experience higher racial and ethnic disparities, so need to invest money and TA in those.
 - iii. Member Srolestar shared that strong applications/proposals showing collaboration across partners should be prioritized.
 - iv. Member Efrain suggested diversifying funding across both existing programs and those more in startup mode. Not to put eggs all in one basket.

II. Co-Chair Ellis asked OYCR staff, Krystal Lewis, to discuss process for Title II Plan.

- a. Krystal shared overview and that updating 3 Year Plan is an annual process.

III. Co-Chair Ellis will streamline notes into recommendations and then send to the subcommittee ahead of next meeting.

- IV. Co-Chair Ellis asked Co-Chair Mendoza what he would like to see shared from the subcommittee at next SAG YJ meeting.
- Co-Chair Mendoza asked that there be report out on RJ discussions and intention to incorporate into Title II Plan.
 - OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, suggested that Co-Chairs tell SAG YJ that the subcommittee intends for RJ to have substantial section in Title II Plan.
- V. Co-Chair Mendoza polled the subcommittee to see who would like to update SAG YJ. No one volunteered so Co-Chair Mendoza will plan to do report out.

Public Comment (2:10 P.M.-2:25 P.M)

Facilitator: All

- I. No public comments were received

Closing (2:25 P.M.-2:30 P.M.)

Facilitator: Kent Mendoza and Jessica Ellis

- I. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meetings are held the 4th Monday of each month.

Upcoming Subcommittee Meeting Dates:

- 9/28/26 1:00 pm-2:30 pm
- 10/25/26 1:00 pm-2:30 pm
- 11/23/26 1:00 pm-2:30 pm
- 12/28/26 1:00 pm-2:30 pm

The order in which agenda items are considered may be subject to change. Depending on the number of individuals wishing to address the Committee, the Chair may establish specific time limits on comments.

The agenda and meeting materials can be viewed on the [State Advisory Group on Youth Justice webpage](#). Please contact OYCR at SAGYJ@chhs.ca.gov with questions about the meetings.

Any person who wishes to request this notice or other meeting materials in alternative format, requires translation services, or any disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, which would enable that person to participate at the meeting must make that request at least seven (7) business days prior to the meeting date to: SAGYJ@chhs.ca.gov.

ADDENDUM - Notice of Expected Remote Attendance

Member	Expected Attendance
Chair Kent Mendoza	Virtual
Co-Chair Jessica Ellis	Virtual
Greg Srolestar	Virtual
Victoria Birch	Virtual
Efrain Morales	Virtual

Rigo Jimenez	Virtual
Sheri Wiedenhoefer	Virtual
Alannah Tomich	Virtual
Don Carney	Virtual