STATE ADVISORY GROUP ON YOUTH JUSTICE: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
September 28, 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: 165 364 0637 I Password: 212990

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 (SAGYJ) Restorative Justice (RJ) Subcommittee members were in attendance
      - Victoria Birch, Youth Advisory Board Member
      - Don Carney, Executive Director of Youth Transforming Justice
      - 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
      - Greg Srolestar, Director of Research and Technical Assistance with Prosecutors Alliance
      - Javier Stauring, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Healing Dialogue in Action
      - Alannah Tomich, Executive Director with Yolo Conflict Resolution Center (YCRC)
      - Sheri Wiedenhoefer, Executive Director of the Community Justice Center
   b. The following SAGYJ RJ Subcommittee members were not in attendance
      - Efrain Morales, Program Manager of 3Strands Global Foundation
      - Julie Hilt, Founder of the Alternative Restorative Communities (ARC)
      - Rodrigo Jimenez, Associate Director with Youth Alliance
   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

- Austin Dickman, County Liaison Analyst

Approve August Minutes and Addition of New Member (1:10 P.M.-1:20 P.M.)

Facilitator: Chair Kent Mendoza

I. Member Srolestar motioned to approve the August minutes and Member Stauring seconded. Member Tomich abstained due to being absent. All other members voted to approve the minutes. The August meeting minutes were approved.
II. Co-Chair Ellis welcomed Jodie Geddes, SOS Program Director and Healing Services Manager with Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY). Jodie introduced herself. Member Stauring motioned to replace Dr. Geraldine Clarke with Jodie Geddes as a member of the RJ Subcommittee and Member Wiedenhoefer seconded. All members voted to approve the addition of Jodie Geddes as a member of the RJ Subcommittee. All members and OYCR staff introduced themselves to Member Geddes.

Call for New Members Discussion (1:20 P.M.-1:35 P.M.)

Facilitator: Co-Chair Jessica Ellis

I. To prioritize other agenda items for the meeting, this was not discussed.

Debrief 9/16 SAG YJ Meeting (1:35 P.M.-1:45 P.M.)

Facilitator: Co-Chair Kent Mendoza

I. Co-Chair Mendoza shared details from the 9/16 SAGYJ meeting which included OYCR updates, Child Trafficking Unit presentation, an Ending Girls Incarceration (EGI) update, and subcommittee updates. The RJ Subcommittee update included discussion around adding RJ into Title II Plan. Chair Mendoza shared that meeting materials are on the OYCR website and that the last SAGYJ meeting is on December 16. Chair Ellis asked where meeting will be and Chair Mendoza shared that OYCR is working on it but hoping to find a location in Central California.
II. Chair Mendoza shared that Director Lucero will be leaving OYCR in early October. Co-Chair Ellis asked for clarification that Director Lucero will be going back to the bench. OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, confirmed that she will be going back to the civil court in Yolo County. Co-Chair Ellis asked what re-filling position and timeline look like. OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, shared that the Governor's Office will be appointing a new director and there is no timeline.

Review of Title II Plan Draft Recommendations (1:45 P.M.-2:20 P.M.)

Facilitator: Co-Chair Jessica Ellis

I. Co-Chair Ellis recapped what the RJ Subcommittee discussed last time regarding incorporating RJ into the Title II Plan. Co-Chair Ellis explained that Title II is how California spends federal youth justice funds with goal of reducing incarceration and improving quality in detention facilities. Co-Chair Ellis reminded members that one focus for RJ in the Title II Plan is to ensure a balance between alternatives to arrest and leveraging RJ practices as a way to heal harms of system involvement. Co-Chair Ellis also emphasized the importance of fidelity

with RJ without restrictions on limited definitions. Co-Chair Ellis asked RJ Subcommittee about their thoughts.

II. Member Stauring posed question to the Subcommittee around how to include victims and survivors' services/resources. Member Stauring shared that a lot of focus is on servicing youth that commit harm but it is to the detriment of victims and families. Member Stauring encouraged the RJ Subcommittee to find creative ways for funds to address needs of both sides and expressed that California should be caring for everyone encountering the justice system.

III. Co-Chair Ellis shared core goals and purpose areas of Title II funds:
    a. **Delinquency Prevention & Intervention:** Funds programs that prevent truancy, provide job training, and offer mental health or substance use treatment.
    b. **System Improvement & Diversion:** Supports alternatives to detention, community-based programs, and effective reentry/aftercare services to help youth successfully transition back into their communities.
    c. **Reducing Disparities:** Targets the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities (R/ED) and minority overrepresentation within the juvenile justice system.
    d. **Core Protections:** Helps states comply with core JJDPA requirements, such as separating juveniles from adult inmates and deinstitutionalizing status offenders

IV. Co-Chair Ellis tasked the RJ Subcommittee to consider additional recommendations and also asked OYCR if RJ recommendations have to be limited to Title II.

V. OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, shared that the RJ Subcommittee can add to Three-Year Plan, but advised keeping recommendations broad because the role of the RJ Subcommittee is to advise the larger SAGYJ. OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, provided examples that the RJ Subcommittee can recommend grants be available to organizations but cannot make legislative changes.

VI. Co-Chair Mendoza agreed with Member Stauring that public safety is important to all communities and the approach needs to be from the middle. Co-Chair Mendoza also appreciated re-focusing on goals and purpose areas shared by Co-Chair Ellis.

VII. Member Stauring shared that many organizations have worked on efforts to ensure youth don't spend their lives in prison, but have lost some focus on victims/families, so it is important to find ways to challenge old policies that create "us against them" situations.

VIII. Member Geddes shared that RJ creates a cultural shift and must center both those who are harmed and those who harmed to create opportunities for healing. Member Geddes shared that funding pathways are built in antiquated ways, so the State has a lot to do to ensure organizations are able to do this critical work with communities.

IX. Co-Chair Ellis said the RJ Subcommittee can work to ensure alignment with various concepts, but the challenge is to create draft wording.

X. Member Wiedenhoefer left the meeting but affirmed the focus on victims. Member Wiedenhoefer let members know about AB 60 which will work to ensure victims in counties actually have the opportunity for healing.

XI. Member Carney said individuals with lived experience of victims' rights and the organizations they represent should be present to offer guidance.

XII. Co-Chair Ellis refocused members on the role of the RJ Subcommittee to provide recommendations on State Title II Plan.

XIII. Member Stauring asked who represents victims' services at the State level.

XIV. Member Tomich said that California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Office of Victim & Survivor Rights & Services (OVSRS) is one such organization and that Chief Mariam El-Menshawi is a mover and a shaker. Member Tomich also shared that a potential bill (AB 1681) is about county district attorney's and OVSRS better connecting with victims.

XV. Co-Chair Ellis shared that AB 60 requires counties to notify survivors about any RJ services in their county.

XVI. Member Stauring said his organization has connected with OVSRS and that some funding is available, but it is mostly for adults.

XVII. OYCR staff, Protima Pandey, shared that OYCR works with youth up to 26 and asked the RJ Subcommittee to think more broadly.

XVIII. Co-Chair Ellis said if members were to turn this conversation into a recommendation for SAGYJ around Title II funding into counties, RJ Subcommittee wants needs of both parties as well as systems change as a whole.

XIX. Member Stauring reinforced that the State should not be adding to the divisiveness and warned that there is danger if survivors start writing about the imbalance of funding for youth who commit harm versus victims. Member Stauring reminded the RJ Subcommittee that this work is all part of preventing further crimes from happening.

XX. Co-Chair Ellis drafted the following: "RJ is and opportunity to move beyond the binary dualistic view of the justice system. Often the one who caused harm has also experienced harm. RJ is an opportunity to center the needs of whomever has been harmed and create meaningful opportunities for accountability and repair of harm." Co-Chair Ellis asked if the RJ Subcommittee had any feedback. No feedback was shared, so Co-Chair Ellis and Co-Chair Mendoza planned to meet separately to create document which can be shared with RJ Subcommittee at the next meeting.

XXI. Member Carney shared that he was invited to speak at the Collaborative Courts Summit hosted by the Judicial Council. Member Carney explained that despite youth courts being within the collaborative court model, they are the only ones that prosecute people which is a contradiction. Member Carney shared that his organization has a youth advisory board which created best RJ practices to share with collaborative courts. Member Carney said that the feedback received from attendees was significant and positive because most jurisdictions are somewhat rigid with their RJ approaches.

XXII. Co-Chair Ellis shared that one question from last meeting was around intentional use of surrogates/surrogate harmed parties in which a harmed party doesn't want to participate in RJ, so organization recruits individuals with similar experience to sit in with person who caused harm. Co-Chair Ellis shared examples from her organization and the potential to have a significant impact. Co-Chair Ellis asked if there were any objections from the RJ Subcommittee about surrogates.

XXIII. Member Carney shared hesitation around youth sitting in as surrogate because they may not have maturity level and therapeutically, it's counter-intuitive.

XXIV. Member Tomich shared that there are some exceptions but agreed with Member Carney.

XXV. Co-Chair Ellis summarized that RJ Subcommittee doesn't need specific definition, but guiding principles.
XXVI. Member Carney asked if RJ Subcommittee could utilize language from its initial forming.
XXVII. Co-Chair Ellis asked folks about thoughts around pairing of RJ and diversion.
XXVIII. Member Srolestar asked if there is document of where Title II funds have been spent historically.
XXIX. OYCR staff, Krystal Lewis, said that a document has been shared in a previous meeting, but approximately 85% of $4.1M funding from 2024 has been spent to fund grantees. She also explained that the other portion covers admin costs, training, and travel for members.
XXX. Member Srolestar expressed curiosity on what specific programming this has gone to and interest in potentially advising the State on future funding.
XXXI. OYCR staff, Krystal Lewis, said that the RJ Subcommittee can ensure RJ is reflected in future proposals and the annual deport that goes to the GO.
XXXII. Co-Chair Ellis welcomed thoughts on past funding streams from any members.

Public Comment (2:20 P.M.-2:25 P.M)

Facilitator: All

I. No public comments were received

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

Facilitators: Kent Mendoza and Jessica Ellis

I. Co-Chair Ellis opened up the meeting for any last thoughts.
II. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meetings are held the 4th Monday of each month.

Upcoming Subcommittee Meeting Dates:

- 10/26/26 - 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
Jodie Geddes	Virtual