

# Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission

## Ethnic and Racial Disparities Subcommittee

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 2025, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting

Subcommittee Chair: Commissioner Edjron Pearson

Subcommittee Members Present:	Commissioner Edjron Pearson, Commissioner Dorinthia Robinson, Commissioner Muskadee Montano, Commissioner Emily Zernick, Wendy Volz Daniels, Melissa Graham
Subcommittee Members Not Present:	Commissioner Charles Greer, Commissioner Evelyn Coker, Commissioner Charles Tubbs, Brandon Gross, Aaron Schutz, Kimberly Jenkins
Wisconsin DOJ Staff:	Kiley Komro, Kerrie Fanning, Lara Kenny, Matt Allord, Jessica Reindl, Mark Rather
Other Agency Staff:	Alana Peck, Catie Carter

#### **Convene**

The Ethnic and Racial Disparities (ERD) Subcommittee convened at 10:05 a.m.

#### **Chair's Welcome and Roll Call**

Commissioner Edjron Pearson welcomed members to the meeting. Quorum was not present.

#### **DOJ Updates**

Staff – There were no staff updates.

Compliance – Matt Allord reported that DOJ staff are completing compliance audits for the period of 10/1/2023 to 9/30/24. Those audits will be completed within the next roughly 30 days. DOJ staff person Jess Reindl has been trained and onboarded and has started completing solo site audits. In the early to late spring of 2025, DOJ staff will finalize all audits, refine and finalize data, report required data to OJJDP, and then present a final report to the GJJC as has been done in previous years.

Grants – Kiley Komro reported that there are currently two grants posted on the Wisconsin DOJ website.

These are:

OJJDP PREA Reallocation Funds - \$15,570 and open only to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections – Division of Juvenile Corrections.

JJ Formula: School-Based Restorative Justice Programs - \$200,000 up to two awards of \$100,000. This program expands the use of restorative practices in schools from a pilot program funded in Wauwatosa School District. This funding opportunity aims to improve youth's school connectedness, reduce formal justice system involvement for school-related incidents, and reduce ethnic and racial disparities in school discipline and referrals. The funding will support school districts in reducing the use of exclusionary school discipline practices; reduce future harmful, disruptive, or delinquent behavior of students; and support accountability and reintegration of students into their classrooms and schools.

Both grants are posted on the [Wisconsin DOJ Grants website](#) and close on 1/31/25.

Legislation – Matt Allord noted that the legislative session has started in Wisconsin. The initial focus has been on getting new members sworn in. Other relevant areas of note that were noted include:

There is a constitutional amendment that will appear on the April 1<sup>st</sup> ballot regarding the requirement to have identification to vote in all elections. This makes the voter ID requirement currently required by state statute a constitutional amendment.

The Legislative Council Study Committee on Emergency Detention and Civil Commitment of Minors will be meeting in January or February and will be recommending bill introductions for the upcoming session. A list of the bills can be found here:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/study/2024/2698>

Raise the Age – there has been no discussion or introduction of a bill to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction.

DOJ staff will track any movement on this and any other bill that GJJC has previously flagged for consideration and report out to Commissioners. Much of this information is covered at GJJC – Policy, Legislation, and Compliance subcommittee meetings. DOJ staff will also work during this session to share information about legislative hearings at the Capitol, commissioners may attend personally or to support GJJC approved items.

## **Business**

### **Discussion to recap October 16, 2024, Dr. Chris Bijoux presentation**

Commissioner Pearson reported that he has used some of the information and strategies in his day-to-day position and inquired if other subcommittee members feel they have

adequate access or connections to decision-makers and the confidence to talk with stakeholders in their local jurisdictions.

Melissa Graham reported that she has previously presented data to stakeholders in her jurisdiction and that the information was not always received well, some of it was taken personally by the audience. This was disheartening to those working towards addressing racial and ethnic disparities and roadblocks remain. There are certain stakeholders who are supportive and receptive to discussing this topic, but others in the Milwaukee area are not.

Commissioner Muskadee Montano reported similar experiences in her jurisdiction. She reported that access and finding a space to speak on disparities was not a problem, but the reception of the information was. Specifically, she reported that certain stakeholders viewed the discussion as a personal attack and took a strong accountability and sanction-based approach towards the discussion. Commissioner Montano reported that difficulties arise when those with decision-making power are not receptive to the message.

Commissioner Pearson also reported difficulty with messaging and stakeholder receptiveness but an overall goal to continue presenting the information and bringing it to everyone's attention.

Kerrie Fanning identified a potential strategy for presentation using a "buddy system" where multiple presenters could discuss the information, one presenter may be a local community member or expert in the field and express their support or show solidarity with the message.

Commissioners and DOJ staff discussed the message of the presentation, specifically focusing on uplifting communities together and finding your own personal "why." The subcommittee agreed that a good future action step is editing the R/ED data PowerPoint presentation to incorporate some of the themes identified by Dr. Bijoux. This includes identifying shared values and experiences, reducing defensiveness and increasing discussion of a common goal, and collaboration. DOJ staff encouraged subcommittee members to continue to ask for support if other presentations or messaging information would be useful.

### **Review and discuss Subcommittee goals and actions steps**

DOJ staff shared current subcommittee determined goals as noted in the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Plan. Each goal was discussed, and commissioners offered feedback.

#### **Goal 1**

Wendy Volz-Daniels asked for clarification as to which experts presented R/ED information and how those with lived experience provide feedback on solutions for reducing disparities.

Kiley Komro noted stakeholders and subgrantees who have come to GJJC meetings to present information and outlined DOJ efforts, past and upcoming, to gather feedback from those with lived experience. This includes both at GJJC meetings, Youth Voice Commission Meetings, and outreach events.

Wendy Volz-Daniels also inquired about strategies to circulate best practices and other relevant information to counties and on a statewide basis. Kiley Komro outlined DOJ efforts to share this information via grant announcements and Matt Allord highlighted the goal that subcommittee members take information from meetings back to their local jurisdictions to share, as local individuals have quality contacts and have established relationships. The subcommittee discussed increasing efforts to share important information with counties and local jurisdictions in 2025. The subcommittee also discussed a continued goal in 2025 to have those with lived experience appointed to the subcommittee, commission, or as guests. Kiley Komro discussed continued efforts by DOJ to meet this goal and the barriers that all states report in recruiting and retaining those with lived experience.

Commissioner Muskadee Montano emphasized this as an ongoing goal, outlining the importance of compensating those with lived experience who dedicate their time to this cause, as they are often asked to do this free of cost and to appear/talk at many different events.

## Goal 2

The subcommittee discussed the potential for using social media, recorded trainings, and online presence to bolster outreach and data sharing efforts. DOJ staff outlined ongoing efforts in this space and will continue to look into future possibilities.

Subcommittee members provided a variety of potential meetings, conferences, etc. where R/ED information could be presented. These include:

Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference

Student services, guidance counselors, special education, principals, superintendent's events such as the Wisconsin Superintendent Association Conference

Wisconsin Association of School Boards

National Association of Social Workers/WI Association of School Social Workers

Wisconsin Childcare Welfare Professional Development System

School Law Conference

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Juvenile Justice Judges meeting

Subcommittee members also discussed the presently unmet requirement that Milwaukee County schools have SROs in their buildings. The subcommittee discussed a future interest in tracking SROs in schools and highlighting best practices for school resource officers.

### Goal 3

Kiley Komro reviewed prior funding awards related to racial and ethnic disparity work. DOJ staff will continue to fund R/ED focused projects and work towards including this point of emphasis in grant work. Subcommittee members are welcome to offer feedback and to model programs or areas of emphasis in this funding space.

### Goal 4

DOJ staff discussed the details of this goal and inclusion in various plans and presentations to GJJC commissioners and other stakeholders. There was no further feedback on this goal.

### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### Announcements

There were no announcements.

### 2025 ERD Subcommittee Meeting Dates: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Virtual

- March 19, 2025
- April 16, 2025
- June 18, 2025
- September 17, 2025
- October 15, 2025

### 2025 GJJC Quarterly Meeting Dates: 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

- February 11, 2025 (virtual)
- May 13, 2025 (in person)
- August 12, 2025 (virtual)
- November 11, 2025 (virtual)

### Adjourn

Commissioner Pearson adjourned the meeting, there was no motion due to lack of quorum.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.