



**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Juvenile Committee
10:00 a.m.
August 20, 2024**

**Youth Diagnostic Development Center
4000 Edith NE, Albuquerque, NM**

Committee Members Present	Committee Members Absent	Others Attending	NMSSC Staff
Cindy Aragon, Chair	Ambrosio Castellano (Speaker)	Nick Costales (JJAC)	Douglas Carver
Justin Boyd (CYFD)	Sheriff Glenn Hamilton (ret'd.) (NM Counties)	Kimberly McManus	Keri Thiel
Bob Cleavall, NMSSC Chair	April Land (UNMSOL)	Alison Pauk (AOC)	
David Richter (LOPD)	Krista Lawrence (Governor)	Christiana Sisneros (OTA)	
Hon. Alma Cristina Roberson (Children's Court)	Ramona Martinez (Pro Tem)	Arthur M. (surname unclear) (OTA)	
	Bridget McKenney (NMDAA)	Mark Donatelli (NMSSC)	
	Angela "Spence" Pacheco (Speaker)	Carmela Romero (Bernalillo County)	
		Brenda Rygg (CYFD/OTA)	

I. Welcome and Introductions. Cindy Aragon, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

II. Approval of Minutes for the June 17, 2024 meeting. Approval of the minutes for the last Committee meeting was postponed as there was not a quorum of Committee members present.

III. Staff Report.

Douglas Carver, Deputy Director, New Mexico Sentencing Commission (NMSSC), informed the members of the Committee that the NMSSC's Executive Director was retiring; her last day will be September 30th. He also informed the members of the Committee that a delegation of staff and members of the NMSSC has attended the National Association of Sentencing Commission's annual conference in Raleigh, NC earlier in August. In addition to Executive Director Freeman and himself, staff who attended the conference included Research Director Nancy Shane and Research Scientist Grace Cairo. Commission members who attended included Commission Chair Bob Cleavall, Chair Aragon, Mark Donatelli, and Krista Lawrence, a member of

the Juvenile Committee. Chair Cleavall and Mr. Donatelli both presented on conference panels. He also informed the members of the Committee that Research Scientist Angelica Gurule had left the NMSC staff as she had started law school in California.

IV. Next Meeting

Chair Aragon informed the members of the Committee that she hoped that the next meeting could be scheduled for three or four hours in order for the Committee to develop a strategic plan and a direction. Lunch will be provided. Tentative dates would be October 7th or 8th. Deputy Director Carver will send out an email to the Committee list to canvass which dates and times might work best for members. Items on the agenda include both the development of a strategic plan and examination of the Juvenile Community Corrections Act legislation that has been discussed in recent Committee meetings.

V. Tour of the Youth Diagnostic Development Center

Robert Nieto, Superintendent of the Youth Diagnostic and Development Center (YDDC) led a tour of the facility. Throughout the tour he and members of the YDDC staff answered questions from members of the Committee and the others who participated in the tour. Superintendent Nieto took the tour to the facility's Control Center, the Medical Department, onto the entry preliminary processing unit and a housing unit, to the Vocational Education Department, the Education Department, and to the gymnasium and athletic facilities. He informed the members of the Committee that there were 13 girls in residence at the moment, out of a total population of approximately 75 juveniles. Around 60% of the population was under 18, 40% 18 or older. There are six housing cottages, divided roughly into age groupings, though the girls are all in one place regardless of age. Staffing for the facility is an issue.

There is nursing coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the facility, two nurses on staff during the day, one through the night. Two contract medical doctors serve the facility; they are trying to get a permanent doctor. There is also dental staff available, an on-site psychiatrist, and an on-site pharmacy.

The intake unit is for children statewide. Generally, the intake process is 20-25 days, during which the youth is classified, and various diagnostic evaluations and assessments occur, including mental health assessments a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) vulnerability assessment, and medical and physical evaluations. If the child is from the southern part of the state, south of Socorro, they will usually be sent to the John Paul Taylor facility; if they are from the northern part of the state, they usually stay at YDDC. Children with no family will probably go to Taylor. The Taylor facility currently houses about 38 people. The intake process is slightly different for girls – for them, it occurs in the unit for girls.

The exercise regimen for the children is one hour of large muscle work each weekday and one hour of leisure activity each weekday. On weekends those are upped to two and two. Lights out is 9:00 pm; wakeup is 6:00 am. Breakfast is served at 6:20 am. The educational program starts at 7:30 am.

All of those held at YDDC participate in some manner with the full woodshop that is part of the facility. The children come through every other day. Projects that they make can be sent home.

The educational program uses Public Education Department guidelines, and operates as much as possible as a regular school. Information from the child's prior schools is gathered into a transcript. The objective at YDDC is to get the youth a diploma or a GED. Transition coordinators continue to work with the youth once they are out in the community to help to ensure that they complete their education. Classes are held by unit, so the teachers have to know how to work with children who have different levels of educational ability in one classroom. There is also the ability to have dual enrollment classes with Central New Mexico

Community College (CNM); some of the detained youth obtain CNM associate degrees. Classes for the students include mathematics, science social studies, English, with electives in music, vocational education, art, dance and similar programs available. There are also “ingenuity” classes, which is where language classes occur, and Advisory classes, where the students learn life skills, how to do taxes, and the like.

For physical education, there is a ropes course and equine therapy. There is no longer an athletics department, as there is not enough of a population of kids who can travel to form teams, though there is a hope to bring back the wrestling program – one of the YDDC kids won the state wrestling championship for his weight class some years ago. There is a gymnasium and a weight room. There used to be a pool, but it was closed due to the high costs of maintenance.

Members of the Committee and people on the tour asked questions about the number of Native American youth housed at YDDC (four, who do get culturally appropriate services through a contract with a person who organizes those); segregated housing for the youth; disciplinary processes; sanctions on youth who violated policies (they try to stick to “natural consequences”, making sure that any consequences to an infraction are related to the act; the youth might get limited visiting privileges only for violent incidents, or if a parent brings in contraband); how the children inform the staff when they are sick or need a medical appointment; procedures around receiving medication; what is done in case of emergency medical situations; procedures for transgendered youth; how letters are handled; how visits are handled (each juvenile has a visitation list; PB&J provides services and works with the families); the number of “crossover” kids (10 to 15 at YDDC); dual sentencing; the classification process; recidivism; how intellectually disabled children are handled in the education program; graduation rates (over both facilities, there is a 95% graduation rate including those who take the GED); the technical facilities they have for education; vacancies in the education program (there are many); and for more details on classes.

VI. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.