

- ▶ DOC Diversion—Report on the First Year.....1
- ▶ RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT—
REVIEW OF JULY DATA2
- ▶ COMMITTEE UPDATE, JUSTICE SYSTEM NEWS.....3



JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE — JDAI

DOC Diversion—Report on the First Year

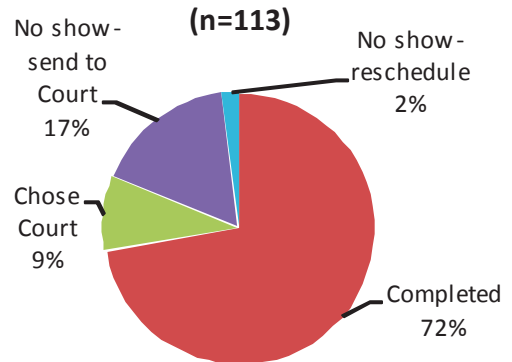
Dakota County’s Disorderly Conduct (DOC) Youth Accountability Program (YAP) is now one year old. The program is one of several diversion opportunities offered by the Dakota County Attorney’s Office to prevent first time and low level offenders from penetrating further into the juvenile justice system. The DOC YAP was created in response to a 2013 decision point analysis completed by the County Attorney’s Office. The analysis showed first time DOC offenders made up a large share of all juveniles charged in Dakota County in 2012, and most of the incidents occurred in and around schools.

In keeping with evidence based practices which encourage a “light touch” for low level offenders, the program is a one-day intervention that includes four hours of supervised community work service, and an afternoon victim empathy/ emotional regulation class with parents. Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom explained the program is a partnership between his office and Community Corrections. “The Dakota County Attorney’s Office is responsible for ensuring juveniles are referred based on the program’s guidelines, sending the letter notifying the juvenile of their eligibility for the program, and then turning them over to Corrections. Corrections takes the lead on the structure of the day including transportation, community work service, and the educational component for both juveniles and their parents.”

In its first year of operation, 113 juveniles were referred to the DOC YAP. Of these, 72% (n=82) completed the program, while 26% were referred to court either because their parents chose court or because they repeatedly failed to appear as scheduled (Chart A).

To measure the effectiveness of the program, pre and post tests are administered. Questions are centered around emotional regulation and positive decision making. Because most of the juveniles referred to the program were involved in fights at school or on school buses, the question, “If someone else takes the first swing, it is ok for me to hit back,” was of particular interest to program evaluators. Responses indicate some positive changes. Strongly Agree-Agree dropped from 42% in the pre-survey to 27% in the post-survey (Chart B). Similarly, responses for the question “It is someone else’s problem if they make me so made I yell or hit them – they were asking for it,” moved from 54% to 68% Strongly Disagree-Disagree.

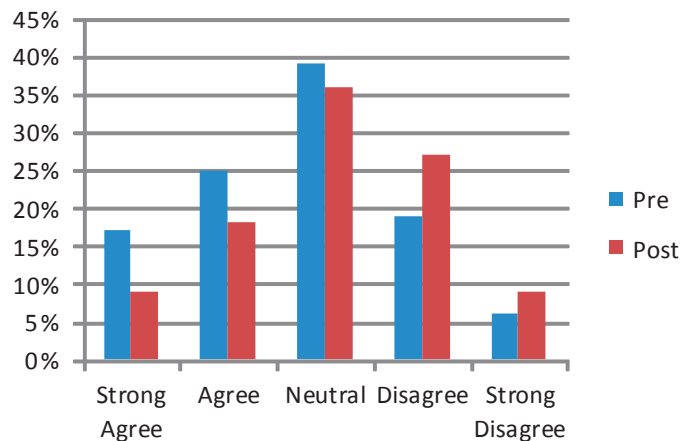
Chart A: DOC Diversion Program Status



Backstrom expressed satisfaction with the progress of the program. “The primary goal of the ... Program was to have 100% participate from all juveniles who were eligible,” he explained. “That will continue. It’s imperative to hold the juvenile accountable – that can be done in one day, along with all of their sanctions.”

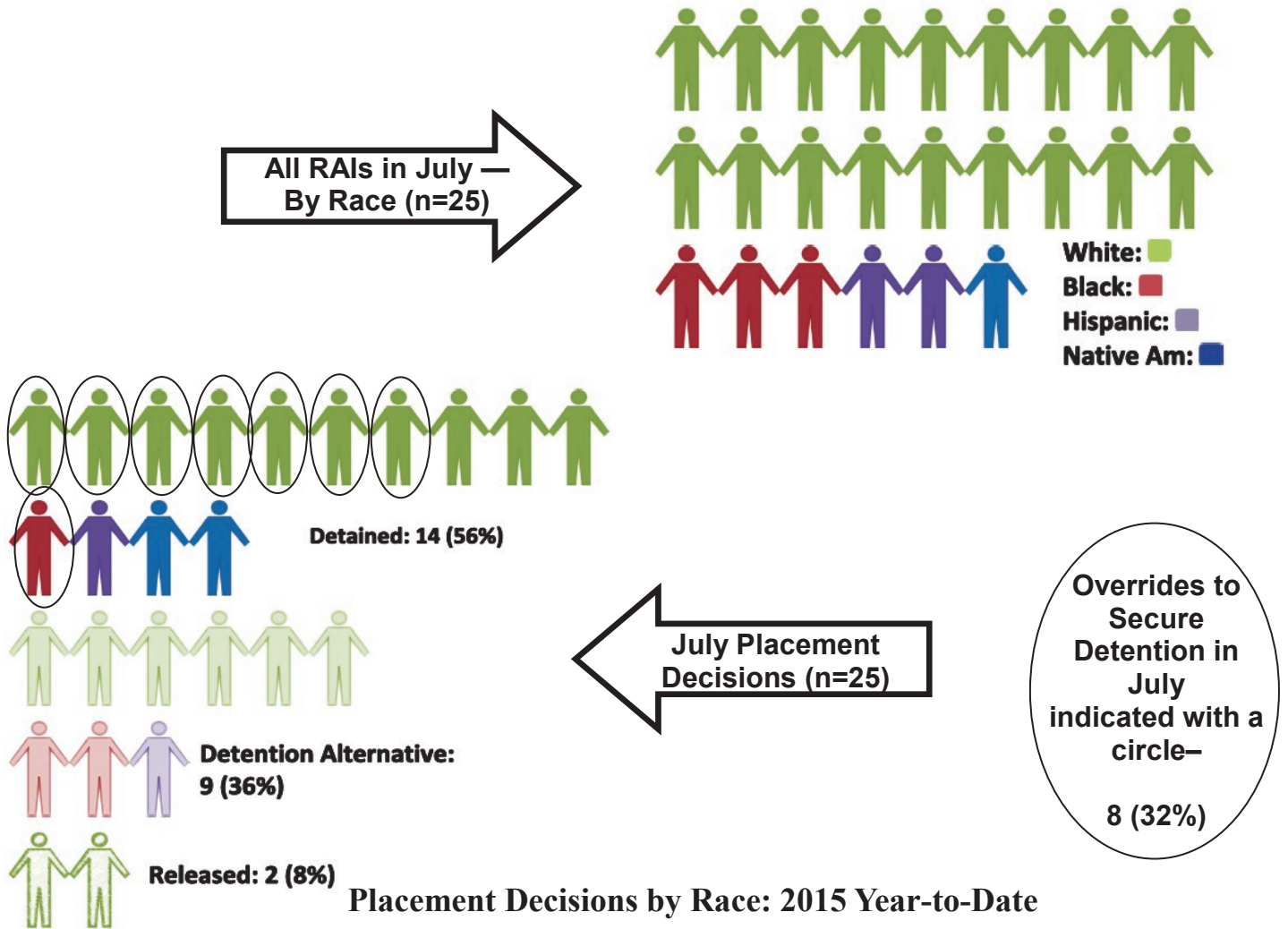
For more information on the DOC Diversion Program, contact Meg.Grove@co.dakota.mn.us.

Chart B: It is ok for me to hit back if someone takes the first swing (Pre- Post- Program)



Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI): July Screening Results

Dakota County's Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) is the product of collaboration of Community Corrections, local law enforcement, the County Attorney's Office, and public defenders. According to Minnesota state law, secure detention can only be used between the time of arrest and first court appearance if a juvenile is a risk to public safety, and/or at risk of failing to appear for his/her first court hearing. The RAI uses objective criteria to determine a juvenile's risk level. Juveniles who pose low levels of risk are released to their families. Those who pose moderate risks may be sent to detention alternatives such as a shelter or foster care, while juveniles who pose the highest risks are held in secure detention at the JSC. RAI results may be overridden under certain circumstances by a judge or a JSC supervisor.



Outcome	White	Black	Hispanic	Am. Indian	Asian	Total
Released to ATD*	26 (37%)	14 (28%)	7 (54%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	47 (34%)
Shelter	22	14	4	0	0	40
GPS	1	0	0	0	0	1
House Arrest	3	0	3	0	0	6
Released to Parent/Guardian	8 (11%)	9 (18%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	18 (13%)
Held in Secure Detention	37 (52%)	27 (54%)	5 (38%)	4 (100%)	1 (100%)	74 (53%)
Total	71 (51%)	50 (36%)	13 (9%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	139

* Alternative to Detention

2015 JDAI Workplan Update

ELIMINATING RACIAL DISPARITIES (ERD) COMMITTEE

The ERD Committee continued its efforts to reduce the number of youth of color trespassed from local community centers. The meeting began with a report of a recent incident at a local community center involving members of the Dakota County juvenile advisory council. Thereafter, committee members received an update about the Marnita's Table Decision Point event. Everyone who attended had a positive experience. The committee discussed using the Marnita's Table "intentional social interaction model" (ISI) to foster communication between community members and community center staff. A training will be held on August 26, 2015 to prepare committee members to facilitate the model. The training is scheduled during the morning. Corrections will look into evening training opportunities so community members can attend. In addition to the training, committee members discussed ways to encourage participation in the ISI once it is planned. Several valuable strategies were shared, such as ensuring the ISI is held on a bus line, choosing a time that is convenient for working adults, and providing childcare.

The next ERD Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2015, in the Training Room at the Juvenile Service Center, 12:00-1:30 pm.

JUVENILE ADVISORY COUNCIL (JAC)

Recruitment efforts for the community JAC have yielded encouraging results. The July meeting was attended by four young people. The group discussed collateral consequences of their involvement in the juvenile justice system and began to draft a list of questions they and other juvenile offenders might, have about having a juvenile offense on their record and the potential to get it expunged. Corrections will arrange for speakers to partner with JAC member to answer the questions the group identified. JAC members will translate the information into a publication for young people on probation.

The Juvenile Service Center JAC continued its work on the simplified resident handbook. This month the group finished editing content and began work to add eye catching and engaging graphics. It is anticipated they will finish with the handbook next month and move on to providing feedback regarding family engagement.

JUVENILE JUSTICE IN THE NEWS

Simley Students Participate in DecisionPoint! 2015 Conference

The Inver Grove Heights Community Schools (ISD #199) webpage features an article about the Decision Point Unconference. The article noted eight Simley students participated in the DecisionPoint! 2015 Conference, and explained, "DecisionPoint! brings together decision makers from the criminal justice system, leaders in mental health and public education, and community members to collaborate, share, and find solutions to reduce the number kids of color routinely ensnared in the criminal justice system." The article explained, "student leaders shared their perspective on how schools and other government agencies can partner to support students and keep them on the path to college and career success."

Simley High School Assistant Principle Heidi Klukas, an Unconference attendee, said six of the eight students are graduates of the Skills & Leadership Groups at Simley who were funded by Dakota County's JDAI through a grant from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs. The Skill & Leadership Groups included students who had histories of disruptive behaviors in school, but learned to regulate emotions, and to use their natural leadership abilities in positive ways.

See the full article at: <http://isd199.sharpschool.com/cms/One.aspx?portalId=20241642&pageId=29993138>.

For more information on JDAI please contact:

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