

# PUBLIC FEEDBACK REPORT NO. 2

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PUBLIC FORUM  
AT THE ED RICE COMMUNITY CENTER  
MAY 16, 2015

Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium (CJJC), Shelby County, Tennessee



# BACKGROUND

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: May 16, 2015, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

LOCATION: 2907 North Watkins, Memphis, Tennessee, 38127

CJJC ATTENDEES: Sandra Boyd, Quincy Hughes, Thurston Smith, Dorothy Thomas, Freda Williams

OTHER NON-PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Mayor Mark Luttrell, Marlinee Iverson (Assistant County Attorney), Tom Coupe (Judge's Action Center Representative), Barry Mitchell (Chief Probation Officer & Administrator), and Bill Powell (Settlement Agreement Coordinator),

GENERAL PUBLIC (affiliation listed if available): There were approximately 35 attendees. Those that filled in a roster were: Benjamin Booker, Eunice Carruthers, Robert Dickerson, Donna Ezell, Christine Grandberry, Bob Johnson, Patricia Lee, Stephanie Love (Shelby County School Board member), Andrew Maloney, Joseph Maloney, Philip Maloney, France McNeil, Loretta Miller, Cedric Moore, Rebecca Murrey, Crystal Norment, Sheryl Taylor, Rodriquies Thompson, Telise Turmen, and Kevin Williams

FACILITATOR: Community Outreach Chairperson Thurston Smith

MEETING NOTICE DISSEMINATION: CJJC Facebook page, County Government website announcement, Countywide email dissemination, and announcements on Channel 13, MY101, What's Happening with Myron Mays, and I Heart Media with Bev Johnson. Also CJJC members Mr. Smith and Dr. Williams appeared on WMC-TV Channel 5 the morning of the forum and announced details of it.

# OVERVIEW

The meeting began with introductory comments by Mr. Smith about the CJJC and its relationship with Juvenile Court, the Department of Justice, and the Memorandum of Agreement. Thereafter, Mr. Smith solicited questions or comments from attendees. Mr. Smith stated that attendees could fill out index cards with their questions (cards and pens were provided) or simply stand and speak their mind. Because the questions and comments were varied and covered many different topics, we have decided to detail what we heard in list form:

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1. Several parents had complaints about the Court's rulings on child support and child custody matters. After allowing them to speak, they were told that the CJJC is not directly involved with those issues. Rather, the CJJC is focused on being a liaison between the Court and the public regarding matters of juvenile justice (equal protection, due process, and safety from harm).
2. One individual identified himself as a juvenile mentor and complained about one of his mentee's records. Briefly, the juvenile, who is now an adult, was told that his delinquency record would be sealed but now that he is looking for a job as an adult, future employers are discovering the prior record.
3. Rebecca Murrey expressed concerns over recent school merges and wanted to know what is being done to let children know that they did not need to be scared or live in fear.
4. Cedric Moore spoke about an article he read about the Baltimore juvenile system (that had some roots in an Australian juvenile system). He stated that he liked what he read. Ms. Thomas talked about how she too was aware of these systems and that she felt that a hallmark of both of them was the active participation of the community in juvenile justice affairs.
5. Stephanie Love talked about an experience with her juvenile son. She said she taught him to not "hold things" for other people and was surprised to get a phone call from the police that he had been found possessing marijuana (that was located inside a recording device that was inside a backpack that was given to her son). School officials and the police department asked her to pick up her son so that he would not be taken to detention, and she refused. She told the officer to "let him ride." Thereafter, she received phone calls from the police and juvenile court detention officials on an hourly basis asking her to come get her child. She refused because she wanted her son to learn a lesson. She was told that it would cost \$150 for her son to spend the night in detention. She waited until 11:59 am the next day to pick him up. She was very proud with her approach to this situation.
6. Ms. Love also spoke about where the members on the CJJC lived. She wanted to know if the CJJC members adequately represented people of all areas of the city, including high-crime or low-income areas. Mr. Smith and Ms. Thomas explained that members did not know of each other's residences but that everyone on the CJJC is available to everyone in the public and that the CJJC was willing to travel to all areas of the county to interface with the public about juvenile justice. Ms. Love was also told that there were two vacancies on the CJJC and was given information about how to access the online application and/or contact Ms. Iverson for information on applying for a vacancy.
7. Several people raised concerns about strategies that are used to share information with the public about the forum. One woman asked for ways in which members of the community can attend juvenile court meetings and/or provide some direct

- input into process/procedures. The CJJC’s website, Facebook page, Ms. Iverson’s email, and Mr. Coupe’s email addresses were shared multiple times with the attendees.
8. Crystal Norment asked a question about whether Juvenile Court responds to questions from the public and in what manner.
  9. Patricia Lee submitted an index card asking how often the CJJC would hold public meetings. She suggested that a meeting be held every two months “in the north, south, east, and west parts of the all the communities with two held in a central location.” She also wrote, “Please include the neighborhoods that hold monthly meetings and organizations to help spread the news, and please don’t forget to use the foot soldiers.” She identified herself as chairwoman of the Umuja Foundation and gave her phone number (901-255-4840) and email address (mylesfamilyfoundation@live.com).
  10. Rodrequies Thompson (with Juvenile Intervention and Faith-Based Follow-Up) submitted an index card asking, “Is truancy being addressed?” and left his email address ([rod@jiffyouth.org](mailto:rod@jiffyouth.org)). He did not articulate any particular problems with truancy or make any suggestions.

## ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Consortium members have met and discussed items brought up at the public meeting, and we have the following concerns:

1. None.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide feedback from Overview Item 1 to defense attorneys so that they can provide their juvenile clients with information about the confidentiality (and accessibility) of their delinquency records.
2. Provide information to the CJJC about the best way that CJJC members can direct the public on finding information about public meetings, taking tours of juvenile court, and asking questions about juvenile court practices and happenings.

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3. Because there was some discussion about juvenile justice programs in Baltimore, Australia, and other places that have improved conditions for juveniles, the CJJC would like to know more about alternative programs that are available to the Court so that this information can be communicated to members of the public who have questions about such matters. The CJJC would also like to know about the success rates of these programs, where available.

4. Because Ms. Love is a school official who has regular contact with juveniles and their parents, the CJJC would like information to be provided to her about the harm that can be done to a juvenile while in detention, especially to a juvenile who does not meet any of the thresholds for being placed in detention. The Court would like parents to be educated on not using detention as a means of teaching their children “a lesson.”

Approved:  
Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium  
June 2015