



THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S TASK FORCE ON ACES-INFORMED COURTS MEETING MINUTES

July 27-28, 2022

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

The Chief Justice's Task Force on ACES-Informed Courts (TFAC) met at the University of North Carolina Asheville Campus in Asheville on Wednesday, July 27, 2022. The meeting convened at 3:00 PM. The following TFAC members, Advisory Group members, North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) staff, and guests were present.

TFAC Members

- Chief Justice Paul Newby, Convenor
- Judge Andrew Heath, Co-Chair
- District Attorney Ben David, Co-Chair
- District Attorney Seth Banks
- Clerk Meredith Edwards
- Chief Johnny Jennings
- Nalini Joseph
- Judge Quentin McGee
- Judge Angelica McIntyre
- Judge Mario Perez
- LaToya Powell
- Mike Silver
- Amelia Thorne

Advisory Group Members

- Professor Sara DePasquale
- Dr. Peter Kuhns
- Chief Deputy Secretary William Lassiter
- Emma Paul
- Chief Deputy Secretary Susan Gale Perry

Guests

- Shanna Arrington
- Chancellor Nancy J. Cable
- Judge J.H. Corpening, II
- Meaghan Dennison
- Janessa France
- Dr. Mimi Graham
- Liz Henderson
- Alex Howard
- Dr. Beth Moracco
- Macon Newby
- Nick Pylypiw
- Siarra Scott

NCAOC Staff

- Lori Cole
- Kiesha Crawford
- DeShield Greene

Welcome and Year 1 Opening Remarks

Chief Justice Newby, Judge Heath, and DA David welcomed everyone and thanked the TFAC and Advisory Group for their commitment to the Task Force mission.





Welcome to UNC Asheville

University of North Carolina-Asheville (UNC-A) Chancellor Dr. Nancy Cable welcomed the TFAC and Advisory Group Members to the UNC-A campus and thanked them for their work to help NC citizens.

Approve Meeting Minutes from April 29th

Prior to the meeting, an amendment to the April 29th meeting minutes was made to reflect Emma Paul is a member of the Advisory Group. With that amendment, LaToya Powell made a motion to approve the April 29th Task Force meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Judge McGee. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Task Force Year One Deliverables Discussion

Judge Heath provided an overview of the two-day agenda. The first day will focus on the deliverables achieved in the first year of the Task Force's convening.

ACEs Bench Card

The Education Subcommittee completed the ACEs bench card, which was based on national and state resources. Amelia Thorn offered an overview of the card, which included sections on courtroom practices, child specific considerations, and courtroom communications. The bench card was distributed in July at the Superior Court Judges' Conference, the District Court Judges' Conference, and the District Attorneys' Conference. DA David added that the elected county sheriffs were provided copies of the bench card at their conference also.

YASI Bench card

Work on the YASI (Youth Assessment Screening Instrument) bench card continues. This bench card will help judges learn how to use the YASI as part of their work in juvenile court. The next step is to create a video about how to use the YASI.

Judicial Training

Mike Silver explained the new advanced juvenile certification tracts, child welfare and juvenile justice, through the NC Judicial College at UNC. UNC School of Government Professors Sara DePasquale and Jacqui Greene worked with NCAOC to create this new advanced certification that will be offered to district court judges in Fall 2022. There are several new required courses for both the child welfare and juvenile justice certification through the NC Judicial College. A four-year cycle is anticipated for judges to receive the advanced certification. The current initial juvenile court certification is on a two-year cycle. There are no plans to include the advanced certification process in the NC General Statutes.

Amelia Thorn discussed the ACEs training that was developed for district court judges. The training was initially piloted in August 2021 to a select group of judges. Using feedback from the pilot, the training was presented at the October District Court Judges' Conference. The Bolch Institute is currently working on a project to study the effects of trauma informed practices in the courts.





A new district court judges' orientation course focused on trauma-informed judicial practices will premier in June 2023 (as part of the week reserved for the spring judicial conference). The timing and format is informed by feedback indicating it is better to receive this type of training early in a judge's career and a preference among judges for in-person learning.

Five hours of instructional time will be allocated for the content. Getting buy-in from judges is crucial; some judges have expressed concerns about the relevancy of trauma informed court practices and assuming there is trauma. There are also concerns about the extra time it will take to apply trauma informed practices and interaction techniques.

Judge McIntyre stated that having individuals who have experienced trauma speak about how court made them feel contributed to her district's buy-in. There was discussion about showing the Resilience movie in-person at various conferences or live online to raise awareness about trauma and trauma-informed practices. Judge Corpening noted it was shown at the Fall 2019 District Court Judges Conference. The Education Subcommittee will explore options for this.

Role Specific Training

Beth Moracco and Siarra Scott of the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center (IPRC) gave an update on the role specific training being developed for all judicial officials, attorneys, and court staff and an overview of the Building Trauma Informed Courts (BTIC) project. The project began in January 2022 and is funded by the Governor's Crime Commission.

Three online modules offer the role specific content through the Learning Center, which will allow the trainings to be delivered on-demand. The first module provides a foundation for ACEs and the Courts. The second module focuses on Evidence Based Strategies for Resilience including trauma informed practices before, during, and after court. The third module is the training that is specific to the user groups.

A second deliverable for the BTIC is to create an informational booklet to educate minors about the courts and give adults a tool to communicate with minors about the court process in an age-appropriate way. The goal is to conduct the pilot of the modules and create the booklet content by Spring 2023 with both projects finalized by Fall 2023. The remainder of 2022 will focus on finalizing the content, creating the content, and developing the educational booklet.

LaToya Powell inquired if juvenile court counselors (NCDPS employees) could view the training that is being developed through the BTIC Project. The training will be free for all Judicial Branch employees. There was discussion to potentially place the training on a public facing page so non-Judicial Branch staff can access the training. The Learning Center may be able to allow state employees to access the training if they have access to the Learning Center.

In considering the Year 2 deliverables, CSC Edwards asked the TFAC to consider how clerks can understand the trauma that respondents / wards may have experienced when hearing





guardianship matters and how clerks can support trauma informed practices and address secondary trauma.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 5:00pm.

Thursday, July 28, 2022

The TFAC reconvened at 8:30am at the UNC-A campus.

Opening Remarks: Defining Goals and Objective for Year Two

DA David explained that Year 1 of the TFAC was devoted to being more trauma informed through outreach, bench cards, and ongoing training development. Year 2 will be about making courts more resilient. The three goals for the second year are to:

- Identify resources at the district court level. This will be accomplished through creating navigator positions and resource mapping using technology, such as the data from the Cape Fear Collective.
- Identify and implement ACEs informed programs for adults. This includes recovery courts, veterans courts, and family courts.
- Identify and implement ACEs informed programs for children. This includes safe babies courts, the success sequence, and the Access and Visitation Program.

ACEs-Informed Programs for Young Children: Safe Babies Courts

The TFAC heard a presentation from Zero to Three (ZTT) on the premise and model of Safe Babies Courts (SBCs) on July 13th. Dr. Mimi Graham, with the Florida Early Childhood Courts, presented on the program from a state perspective. Dr. Graham identified ten lessons learned from Florida's implementation, which started with 2 sites and now has 32 sites.

1. Choose Strong Partners and Leaders, such as the Court Improvement Program and the Chief Justice.
2. Embrace the Science of brain development, trauma, and resilience by using science to guide decisions.
3. Pirate Existing Materials and learn from others by using existing materials from ZTT and other states and learning from other state funding strategies.
4. Invest in Court Teams by having team trainings to understand science, build relationships, and learn as a team.
5. Fast Track Services to Strengthen Families' by building Child Parent Psychotherapy Workforce.
6. Hope for the Best and believe in change but Prepare for the Worst and that not all families will be successful.
7. Relationships are the Secret Ingredient for Success. Model healthy team relationships and offer supportive relationships.
8. Recognize that Change is Hard, hard on children, on families, and it is hard becoming a team.
9. Invest in Data to show SBCs work and positive outcomes.
10. Establish Best Practice Standards for the SBCs following the model of therapeutic courts.





NC has reviewed county data and has agreed to stat with 4 pilot sites, including Mecklenburg and New Hanover. Susan Gale Perry believes funding for safe baby courts can be secured but the lack of services available must be addressed for the courts to be successful. DA Banks inquired about issues related to the lack of resources in rural areas. Dr. Graham stated that Florida wrote a grant to create more opportunities where resources were lacking.

ACEs-Informed Programs for Older Children

School Justice Partnerships (SJPs)

Judge Corpening and DeShield Greene provided a brief overview of the SJP program, the goals, and challenges associated with statewide implementation, such as school board opposition, lack of time to convene meetings, and lack of resources. LaToya Powell advised that each county receives Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) funds to provide juvenile programs. The chief court counselors can be helpful in identifying resources and where there may be gaps in resources.

The TFAC voted unanimously to invite the NC School Board Association to present at the October Task Force meeting. The TFAC also unanimously passed a motion to support statewide implementation of SJPs.

Success Sequence

Judge Heath and Judge McGee discussed the implementation of the Success Sequence model in Columbus County. The Success Sequence is a formula to provide order and structure to young adults to help them avoid or escape poverty. The formula involves three sequential steps: obtain at least a high school education, obtain full time employment, and marry before having children.

Judge McGee is collaborating with NCDPS-Juvenile Justice Chief Deputy Secretary Lassiter to offer a Success Sequence program using JCPC funds through the Dream Center in Columbus County. It will be offered as a tutoring and interpersonal skills program. They are currently writing the program description and curriculum. Robeson County is currently working to implement the model also.

Judge Perez suggested including the program in public schools. Judge McGee noted incorporating this into public schools could be a “hot button” issue. Chief Deputy Secretary Lassiter stated the Dibble Institute created a curriculum in Kentucky and the outcomes were great, resulting in decreased teen pregnancy rates. A grant may be utilized by NCDPS to supplement existing JCPC funds to implement the curriculum statewide.

ACEs-Informed Programs for Adults

Family Courts





Judge Corpening, Lori Cole, and DeShield Greene highlighted the mission, goals, and benefits of the 15 district court districts that have implemented family court best practices. They also discussed current efforts to implement family court statewide, such as the 2022 family court conference, development of family court specific fact sheets, and promotion of best practices to all district courts. Obstacles to statewide implementation include lack of support from the chief district court judge, bench, local attorneys, and court partners, as well as a lack of legislative support and funding.

The TFAC unanimously passed a motion made by Judge Perez and seconded by Amelia Thorn to support statewide implementation of family court.

Recovery Courts

Judge Corpening discussed the various types of recovery courts and the statewide need. The common theme among recovery court participants is lack of a driver's license, DSS involvement, and probationary status. Barriers to statewide implementation include lack of funding, lack of time to implement, and lack of community support groups. Judge Corpening also identified recovery capital—i.e., resources needed for a person to be successful in recovery—housing, transportation, and employment. The absence of these three resources are barriers to recovery.

Chief Justice Newby hopes to use funds from the opioid settlement to implement new treatment courts, but state funding is needed. Obtaining data to show the positive outcomes (e.g., lower recidivism rates) recovery courts produce is imperative. Existing recovery courts may be contacted to identify available data to complete a longitudinal study. Amelia Thorn and Dr. Morocco suggested that Duke and UNC students may be interested in assisting with a data analysis. Judge McIntyre noted that UNC Pembroke wrote the grant for the existing Robeson recovery court.

The TFAC unanimously passed a motion made by Judge Perez and seconded by Amelia Thorn to support statewide implementation of recovery courts.

Access and Visitation Program

Lori Cole, Janessa France, and Shanna Arrington discussed the purpose, services, and funding source of the [Access and Visitation \(A&V\) Program](#). Annually, NCDHHS awards funds for NCAOC to operate an A&V program with designated staff to increase noncustodial parents' access to and time with their children. Currently, there are only 6 A&V coordinators that offer services (i.e., parent education, counseling, supervised visitation, court navigation) to 14 NC counties. The amount of funds has not increased for several years so the grant has not supported legislative pay increases, making it a challenge to retain staff or expand the program.

Coordinators help noncustodial parents identify and address the underlying issues that create barriers to noncustodial parents visiting with their child(ren). The A&V program is designed to reduce the trauma experienced by children and families Noncustodial parents with or without a custody order are eligible





to receive services from the program. The A&V Program assists families impacted by mental illness, families where a parent may be incarcerated or previously incarcerated, families with domestic violence and / or substance use issues, and families impacted by a divorce. These five types of household dysfunction are all adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Shanna Arrington mapped the resources available in the county she serves (Buncombe), which is a concept DA David previously mentioned. Her list includes supervised visitation centers, Justice Resource Center, DSS, child support services, employment assistance, homelessness assistance, mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, and domestic violence resources.

Some family courts have county specific packets available for the public that A&V Coordinators can share with self-represented litigants. However, having statewide family court forms would not only assist families but also attorneys who practice in multiple counties or districts. Adding Guide and File interviews for custody, visitation, modification of custody/visitation, and other child-related court actions could also be very beneficial to citizens statewide.

ACEs–Informed Community Resources: Mapping and Navigation

Nick Pylypiw with the Cape Fear Collective (CFC), a non-profit organization using data to create trauma informed courts and communities, provided an update on the progress of the community data platform (presented at the November 2021 Task Force meeting) and demonstrated that data science can support vulnerable communities.

The community data platform (CDP) launched statewide in May 2022 and is available at www.healthycommunitiesnc.org. Areas included in the CDP include social and economic factors, physical environment, health behaviors, clinical care, and health outcomes. The data can be used locally to identify quantifiable goals and identify areas of concern and opportunity to determine if certain hypotheses are accurate. For example, the CDP has been used to present data to school boards on the effects of early school suspensions. The information available on the CDP can be viewed, downloaded, saved into a presentation, and “quick shared” with others. It was noted that the data in the CDP is slightly dated since CFC only received the 2020 census data in March 2022. Mr. Pylypiw stated that some county data may be better than others.

The TFAC members may contact the CFC for a personal county demonstration of how the CDP can be used locally. There was discussion that area JCPC consultants could be trained on using the CDP to identify where resources may be needed.

The meeting adjourned at 3pm.

Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Task Force is October 21, 2022. The location of this meeting will be announced.

Submitted by DeShield Greene

