

THE JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD  
A DIVERSIONARY AND PREVENTATIVE PROGRAM

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TRINITY COLLEGE 1980

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TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

# TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

*East Hartford, Connecticut 06108*

## INTRODUCTION

The East Hartford Juvenile Review Board is comprised of representatives from the Youth Services Department, Police Department, Board of Education and Juvenile Court. In 1979-80 the Review Board screened approximately 465 cases involving 702 juveniles who had come into contact with the Police Department. Acting as an advisory board to the Police, the Board diverted 65% of these youngsters from Juvenile Court to more appropriate local resources including counseling, restitution, Wilderness School and other Youth Services programs.

In response to repeated requests for technical assistance and information from towns and police departments across the state, the East Hartford Youth Services Department conducted a survey of the existing Review Board Programs in Connecticut. This information, along with a narrative on how the Juvenile Review Board can be an effective alternative to Juvenile Court, is contained in this report.

At this time, the staff of the East Hartford Youth Services Department and the members of our Review Board are pleased to make this report available to you. We sincerely hope that you will find this information useful.

Eugene T. Marchand, Director  
Department of Youth Services

## JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD

The Juvenile Review Board is a diversionary and preventative program designed to act as an advisory board to local police departments in their dealing with juvenile offenders. The Review Board membership is comprised of representatives from youth serving agencies (i.e. police, schools, juvenile court, Youth Service Bureau, clergy, social services, etc.).

The goal of the Review Board is to examine all cases that the police have come into contact with to determine the most appropriate action for that specific case. Representatives from the various agencies may have a different perspective on a youth or know of additional information that would be helpful to the police in deciding on a course of action.

In many cases it has been found that a juvenile arrest was the manifestation of a problem that had been building within a youth or family for some time and may have been visible to other youth services or school officials. Often-times, a police officer will release a juvenile with a warning for a perceived less serious offense without knowing that the child has had several previous contacts with police officers for other "less serious offenses". In these cases a pattern of delinquency is clearly allowed to develop until a more serious offense calls attention to the individual. By this time, a youth may be firmly entrenched in delinquent behavior.

The Juvenile Review Board goal of diverting juvenile offenders to local resources is also important in that our over-crowded Juvenile Court System releases many of these "less serious" youngsters with a symbolic gesture or simple warning without taking any measures to deal with the cases of the delinquent behavior. A local youth serving agency will have the time and resources to diagnose and deal with a juvenile who is more of a troubled individual than a serious offender. By diverting these youngsters from court to a therapeutic referral source where help can be received, the Review Board acts as a preventative program. It is safe to assume that juveniles who have been sent through the labeling process of court only to be released with a warning and no subsequent services, are high risk cases to have further police contact.

Another extremely important aspect of the Juvenile Review Board that can be easily overlooked is the value of having representatives from various youth serving agencies meeting with one another on a regular basis to work together towards a common goal. This cooperation is certain to enhance communication and understanding between agencies which will benefit the entire youth population.

Between 1968 and 1975, arrests of persons under 18 years of age...increased more than 100 percent--some four times faster than the increase in population for this age group....In 1974 about 1 teenager out of every 15 in the nation was arrested, and almost half of all serious crimes in the United States were committed by juveniles.

Well over half of the juveniles who are arrested each year have prior police records....If current trends continue, the chances are estimated to be 1 in 3 of a juvenile acquiring a police record by the time he is 18...

(Coleman, p.386)

Since these figures were obtained in 1974, the situation has not improved; in fact, instances of juvenile delinquency continue to increase with a concomitant rise in the caseload relegated to the Juvenile Court system. The court system unequipped to deal with such a tremendous volume of cases, recidivism rates are also high due to ineffective or merely surface treatment of such individuals.

As the present system seems ineffective in dealing with the problem of juvenile delinquency, a change in the existing procedures seems warranted. What is needed is a change which will provide for both appropriate "treatment" for offenders and for a lightening of the Juvenile Court caseload so that it can once again perform its expected duties effectively. One such alternative is the diversionary/preventative Juvenile Review Board Program.

The emphasis of the adult correctional system is upon exacting payment for crimes committed. In direct opposition, the philosophy of the juvenile court system stresses not so much punishment for anti-social actions as helping the youth to overcome any difficulties which led to the action, in an attempt to prevent further unacceptable behavior. The court system professes to try to deal with the juvenile offender so effectively that he will both want and have the necessary skills to fulfill all his needs and desires in a manner considered within the confines of the law. "The presumption is that the needs of the child, not the seriousness of the offense, should determine the disposition." (Romig, p.199)

The objective is to keep the youth from further involvement with the legal system, to direct him back toward the societally-sanctioned path.

Its lofty goals and purposes notwithstanding, there is an ever-growing concern about the inadequacies of the present correctional system for juveniles. Constitutionally-stated intents do not necessarily dictate the actual state of affairs. As juvenile crime rates increase at an alarming rate, the court system becomes overloaded and cannot possibly execute effectively all duties it is expected to undertake. In addition to the overwhelming backlog of cases faced by the court due to escalating incidences of delinquency, its effectiveness is hampered by underfunding which causes an inability to support the appropriate amount and quality of

staff, services and programs to handle the situation. Substantial financial appropriations unlikely in these inflationary times, another more viable, and less expensive, alternative to complete overhaul of the conventional juvenile court and its proceedings must be found in order that the best interests of youth be served. It is not enough to recognize the deficiencies of the court system or to concede generously that this state of affairs is not necessarily the fault of the court, arising primarily from underfunding and overcrowding of a system unprepared for such circumstances. The problem has been identified and a solution must be found.

Of the approximately two million young people who go through the juvenile courts each year in the United States, about half have done nothing that would be considered a crime in the case of an adult. [They are guilty of "status offenses", actions such as running away from home, underage use of alcohol, "incurability", etc.] However, many of this group are returned to the courts at a later time for having committed serious offenses.

(Coleman, p.386)

Perhaps if these youths had been diverted from the court system and referred to an agency which could better help them in solving their particular problems, this reinvolvement with the law could have been avoided. What seems to be called for, in light of present circumstances, is a system which would distinguish between "troubled youths" and "troublemaking youths", between trivial violations of social norms and minor misdemeanors and felonies, all presently lumped together under the all-inclusive label "juvenile delinquency" merely because the perpetrators occupy the same age range. This distinction would enable many offenders to

be handled by qualified agencies instead of the justice system and make treatment programs more cogent and beneficial to individual delinquents than present attempts.

As the swelling ranks of juvenile offenders show no signs of abatement, the problems of the juvenile court system are enhanced by the complete or almost complete lack of screening services provided at the community level. The court system as it stands simply cannot deal with delinquency of such proportions. Screening, or distinguishing degrees of delinquency, would serve the purpose of keeping those youngsters who can not profit by taking advantage of the services provided by the court and of ensuring that those ultimately referred to the court can profit only through those singular services of that system.

Many youngsters in almost every community in this country could have, or perhaps should have, been screened out of the juvenile court caseload and handled through the instrumentality of more sensitive and responsive police services, school services, and public or private agencies.

(Hahn, p.313)

Community-based agencies are more apt to have the time and resources necessary to help youths presently consigned to follow the course of traditional justice procedures for lack of more appropriate services with which to lend support and aid in overcoming circumstances leading to the delinquency of these youths. Juveniles whose involvement with the law springs primarily or to a great degree from peer pressures, from poor family environment or relationships, or whose offenses are particularly uncharacteristic rarely profit from the court experience. Often, however,

there is no alternative service available, no fitting treatment is forthcoming and thus failure to alleviate the problem or lessen the probability of a repeat transgression results. Diversion of such youngsters away from the traditional judicial process serves to achieve two aims--the youth receives more appropriate services and the court, having had this portion of its caseload removed from its jurisdiction, can deal more effectively and efficiently with those juveniles truly in need of its attention and resources.

Local programs lighten the caseload traditionally relegated to the courts and they can also more successfully cater to certain types of delinquents. Another advantage, in terms of the juvenile court's professed philosophy, is that community-based programs are much faster than the court system. Studies have indicated that treatment initiated as close as possible to the point of crisis is most effective (the crisis point being the committing of the offense or the point of discovery, such as expulsion from school for some misdeed, being picked up by the police, placement in detention or anywhere outside the home, breaking any law and getting caught, etc.) In this period immediately following the "crisis" point, "the youths and their parents are still experiencing it; it is more immediate; it can be seen and talked about." (Romig, p.201) Intervention undertaken on the local level has the advantage of being able to deal with the family and the delinquent youth during this time period, thus enabling their attention and cooperation to be more easily gained and yielding a higher probability that remedial action taken will be successful. As in the majority of cases the first few delinquent offenses (or causes



for crisis) are not serious enough for probation or for punishment within an institution, and the available treatments within such programs are not suitable in any case, local agencies deal with the problem most effectively, being in "the right place at the right time." These services tend to be the most "cost-effective" in terms of preventing major, more complex problems at a later stage by treating and alleviating the difficulty as soon as it is diagnosed.

In theory, diversion programs seem a viable alternative to the court system, providing quick and individually-tailored help to youths by properly-trained staff and in a greater variety of less crowded programs than available through the state. Several such preventative/diversionary programs currently exist in Connecticut. Necessarily differing on many points, in order to adapt to the circumstances peculiar to each particular town, the boards share the same basic philosophy and purposes. The emphasis is on creating a learning experience from the delinquent involvement in order that the youth learn from his mistakes and not repeat any such unacceptable behavior; treatments or punishments stress repentance, restitution and service to atone for offenses rather than the more court-oriented fines, probation or prison; "punishment" is meant to fit the "crime". The object is identify at an early stage patterns of delinquency and to see that youths receive the most appropriate services. Functioning as advisory agents to the police, review boards examine all instances of youths coming into contact with the law. Because the background of most board members is in working closely with juveniles and most know

relatively well the youngsters being discussed, they are able to lend new perspectives and additional details to police reports. With this more complete store of background information about the involved youths, a more informed decision can be made regarding the most appropriate and effective method of dealing with the youth and his offense.

The purpose of Juvenile Review Boards is a serious and important one. Participants do not wish to let youths "off the hook". These boards were conceived to function as an adjunct to the existing law-enforcement agencies (namely the police and the courts) and designed to further the same ends as these agencies with the difference being the method applied to the solution. Review boards are not intended to replace the courts, but to assume jurisdiction over those juveniles such as status offenders, those guilty of misdemeanors and first offenders who might better profit by their methods and referrals. Widespread use of such diversion tactics could improve the quality of the entire juvenile justice system if such programs were perfected and adopted by more localities.

FIRST CONTACT WITH  
LAW-ENFORCEMENT  
AGENCIES



DIVERSION PROGRAMS



JUVENILE PROBATION



COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL  
PROGRAMS



INSTITUTIONAL  
PROGRAMS



PAROLE MAY  
INVOLVE COMMUNITY  
RESIDENTIAL  
PROGRAMS



-----OUT-----

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM OF REHABILITATION

(Romig, fig. 17-1, p. 196)

GEORGE A. DAGON  
MAYOR

TELEPHONE  
(203)289-2781

# TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

*East Hartford, Connecticut 06108*

Dear Youth Director:

I am enrolled in my junior year at Trinity College in Hartford. As part of my studies this year I am involved in an internship program with the East Hartford Department of Youth Services under the supervision of Eugene T. Marchand. In association with the Department, I am conducting a research study on Juvenile Review Boards around the state. It would be greatly appreciated if you would find time to complete the short questionnaire enclosed and return it to me, along with any relevant printed material you might have on hand, by March 1st.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary Eigler, Intern  
Department of Youth Services

ME/bd

Enclosures

NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING QUESTIONNAIRE \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your program include a Juvenile Review Board? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. How often does it meet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the composition of the Board? (I.E. Representatives from Police Department, school officials, social services, concerned public, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is a waiver or permission slip required in order for a case to be heard?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. What referral options are available for consideration by the Board?  
(Counseling, Big Friend-Big Brother/Sister, restitution, written or verbal warning, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the approximate percentage of court diverted cases? \_\_\_\_\_

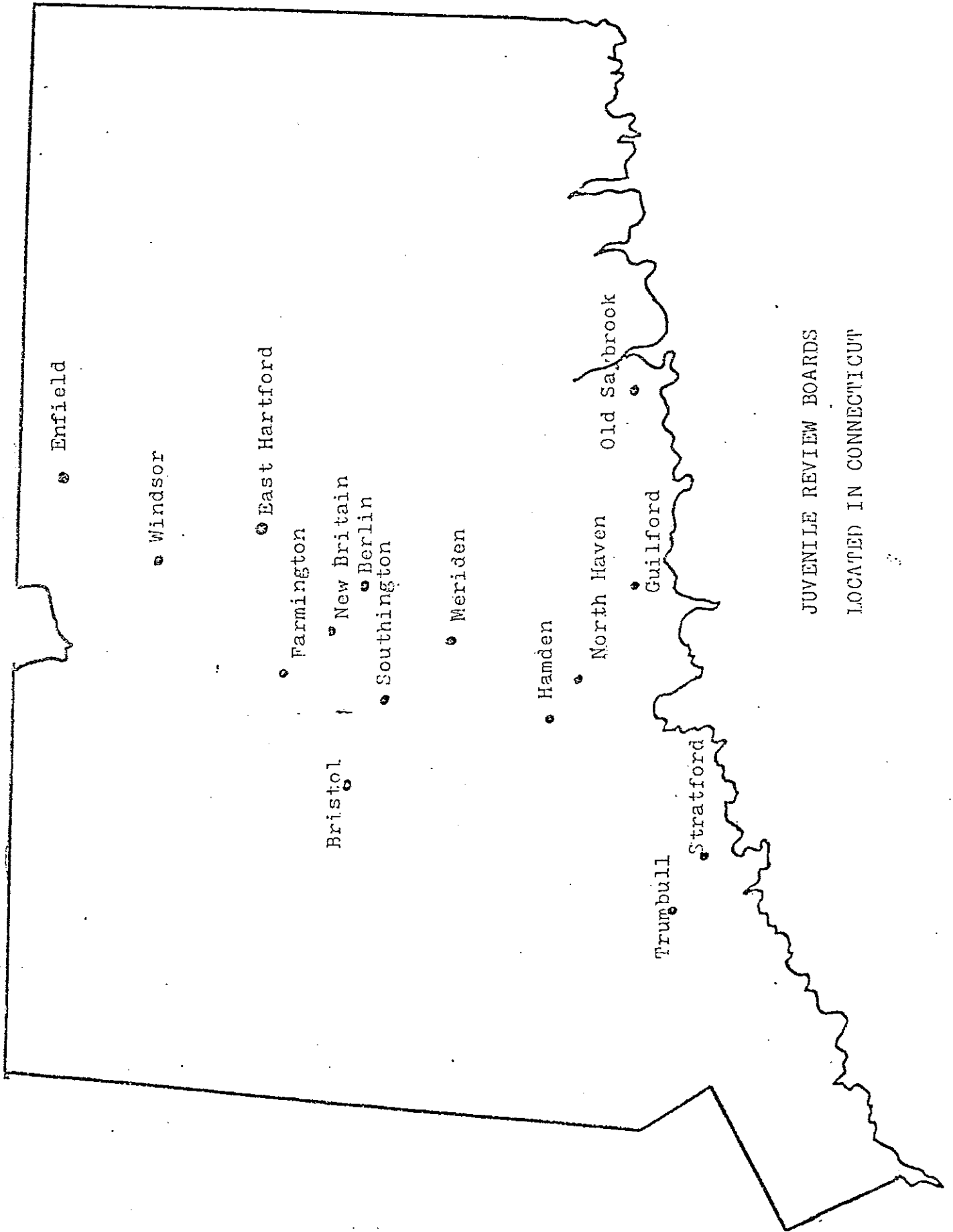
7. Would observation of one of your meetings be possible? If so, when do you meet.  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ When do you meet \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

A copy of this questionnaire and the accompanying cover letter were mailed to each youth-serving agency (Youth Service Bureau, Youth Counselling Center, or other appropriate agency), one per town, included on the CYSA (Connecticut Youth Service Association) list of participating members. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that those failing to return the completed questionnaire do not include a Juvenile Review Board among the services provided by their agencies.

AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE	NEGATIVE RESPONSE	NO RESPONSE
<p>Guilford  Old Saybrook  Farmington  Windsor  New Britain  Bristol  Stratford  Meriden  North Haven  Southington  Hamden  East Hartford</p>	<p>*Berlin  New Milford  *Trumbull  New London  Portland  Westport  Stamford  Greenwich  *South Windsor  Bridgeport  Manchester  Naugatuck  Groton  Stonington  Lyme, Old Lyme  East Hampton  Glastonbury  Mansfield  Fairfield  Branford  Orange  Quinnebaug Valley  Stafford  West Haven  Middletown  Danbury  Norwalk  Norwich  Wallingford  Vernon</p>	<p>Danbury  Darien  Derby  East Haven  *Enfield  Milford  New Canaan  New Haven  North Branford  Plainville  Ridgefield  Salisbury  Seymour  Thompson  Torrington  West Hartford  Wethersfield  Windsor Locks</p>

\*Berlin has just begun operation of a Board; Trumbull has had a Board for a year (contact was with wrong agency); Enfield has the oldest CT Board in existence; South Windsor has just begun a program



• Enfield

• Windsor

• East Hartford

• Farmington

• Bristol

• New Britain

• Berlin

• Southington

• Meriden

• Hamden

• North Haven

• Old Saybrook

• Guilford

• Trumbull

• Stratford

JUVENILE REVIEW BOARDS

LOCATED IN CONNECTICUT



TOWNS WITH JRBS	HOW OFTEN DOES IT MEET	BOARD CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM	WAIVER/PERMISSION SLIP REQUIRED	REFERRAL OPTIONS	PERCENTAGE OF COURT DIVERTED CASES
BERLIN	Twice a month	Juvenile Court, Police Department, Clergy, School Department, Youth Services	Yes	Public Service Restitution Counseling	
BRISTOL	Every week	Juvenile Court, Mental Health Clinic, Clergy, Police Department, School Department, Boys/Girls Club	Yes	Counseling Restitution, CETA Big Brother/Sister Leadership Group Recreation Program Parents	80%
EAST HARTFORD	Every week	Youth Services, Police Department, Juvenile Court, School Department	No	Counseling, Job Bank Restitution, Big Friend Program, Wilderness School Written/Verbal warning	65%
ENFIELD	Every week	Youth Services, Police Department, Clergy, Business Community, Probation Officer Host Home, Elderly citizens	No	Counseling Written warning	58%
FARMINGTON	Twice a month	Youth Coordinator, Juvenile Police Officer, Probation Officer, School Department Host Home, Clergy, Visiting Nurse	Yes	Counseling Restitution Written/Verbal Warning	80%
GUILFORD	Every other week	Juvenile Police Officer Youth Services, School Department, Clergy Community	No	Counseling, Youth Services Big Brothers, Host Homes Restitution, Written/Verbal Warning, Residential Treatment	80%
HAMDEN	Bi-monthly	Juvenile Court, Police Mental Health, Truant Officer, Youth Services	No	Hamden Mental Health Youth Services Verbal Warning	

TOWNS WITH JRBS	HOW OFTEN DOES IT MEET	BOARD CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM	WAIVER/PERMISSION SLIP REQUIRED	REFERRAL OPTIONS	PERCENTAGE OF COURT DIVERTED CASES
MERIDEN	Twice a month	Youth Services, Health Department, Mental Health Department, Police Department, Family Services	Yes	Restitution Public Service Counseling	95%
NEW BRITAIN	Every Week	Community youth serving agencies, Police Department, School Department, Juvenile Court	Yes	Counseling Restitution Education Programs Recreation Programs Companion Programs	15% (Due to lack of three diversion?)
NORTH HAVEN	Every week	Juvenile Police Officer School Department, Clergy Alcohol Services agency Community Services, Youth Services	Yes	Counseling Restitution New Leaf Program School Department	33%
OLD SAYBROOK	2nd and 4th Wednesday	Youth & Family Services School Psychologist, Clergy Public Health Nurse, Juvenile Police Officer, Physician, Public citizen	Yes	Counseling, Restitution Tutoring, Written warning, Apology (written or verbal) Shoplifting seminar Report written	90%
SOUTHINGTON	Every other week	Police Department Probation Department School Department, Clergy Town Council, YMCA, Citizen	Yes	Verbal warning Restitution State agencies Local agencies Volunteer service time	80%
STRATFORD	Twice a month	Truant Officer, Juvenile Probation, Community Services Catholic charities, D C Y S Council of Churches, Youth Officer	No	Warning Warning with referral	

TOWNS WITH JRBS	HOW OFTEN DOES IT MEET	BOARD CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM	WAIVER/PERMISSION SLIP REQUIRED	REFERRAL OPTIONS	PERCENTAGE OF COURT DIVERTED CASES
TRUMBULL	Once a month	Police Youth Officer People Services, Juvenile Probation Officer, Youth Services, School Department School Psychologist	Yes	Counseling Big Brother/Sister School testing Job Bank, Team Group Support system in school Probation-Youth Services	93%
WINDSOR	Every week	Police Department, Youth Services, Clergy Social Services, School Department, Juvenile Court	Yes	Counseling, Written/Verbal Warning, Restitution NYPUM Program, Wilderness School, Essay, Traffic Safety Program, Fire Education Program, Big Friend Program	50%

TOWN	YSB DIRECTOR	PHONE
BERLIN	C.DAVIS	828-5678 or -350
BRISTOL	ROBIN CLARK	589-7119
EAST HARTFORD	EUGENE MARCHAND	568-0181
ENFIELD	DOROTHY ALLEN	745-0371 ext. 391
FARMINGTON	ALAN HUTCHINSON	673-3271
GUILFORD	PET. LARRY GELO (PD)	453-6106
HAMPDEN	BARBARA RICE	288-5641 ext. 2-1
MERIDEN	EDWINN NAAMON	634-0003 ext. -39
NEW BRITAIN	RANDY WEISS	224-2491 ext. 311
NORTH HAVEN	WENDY LISTER BORST	239-2566
OLD SAYBROOK	PAM GOMEZ	388-1055
SOUTHINGTON	CONNIE TIFFANY	621-0165
STRATFORD	PAT NAYOR	377-0187
TRUMBULL	DOCT O'HALLORAN	261-5110
WATERFORD		
WINDSOR	FRED DORFMAN	688-3675

TOWN	JUVENILE POPULATION*
BERLIN	3692
BRISTOL	15410
EAST HARTFORD	12553
ENFIELD	13724
FARMINGTON	3916
GUILFORD	4645
HAMDEN	10512
MERIDEN	14489
NEW BRITAIN	13587
NORTH HAVEN	5797
OLD SAYBROOK	2430
SOUTHINGTON	11070
STRAFORD	10996
TRUMBULL	9949
WATERFORD	( no data given )
WINDSOR	6526

\* Data obtained from CT State Dept. of Education

### Frequency of Meetings

Most boards surveyed meet bi-weekly (every other week) or on a weekly basis. Some, however, are less exact and convene only when there are cases to discuss. The scheduling of meetings is purely discretionary depending mainly on the number of cases occurring in the particular town. What is important is that, if meetings are not regularly planned, they are called promptly when a case requiring the attention of the board arises in order that it be handled within the "crisis period". As boards become more established in their respective towns, however, it is expected that all cases coming to the attention of the police involving juveniles will be forwarded for consideration of the board, thereby increasing the impact of the boards and necessitating a more formalized scheduling structure.

### Composition of Boards

Organizations represented on various boards include:

- Police Dept.--Juvenile Division
- Youth Service Bureau
- Family Counselling Services
  - Catholic Family Services
- School System--Psychologist
- Attendance Officer
- Guidance Counselor
- Assistant Principal
- Principal
- Social Worker
- Special Services
- Clergy
- Public Health Nurse
- Physician
- Juvenile Court--Probation Officers
- Host Home Program Coordinator

Boys and Girls Clubs  
Mental Health Clinic  
DCYS  
Town-sponsored Runaway Project  
Town Councilman  
YMCA  
Attorney  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters/Big Friend  
Representatives of the "Concerned Public"

Boards ranged in size from seven (7) to fifteen(15) members. Inclusion of representatives from various agencies is recommended to ensure proper breadth of background knowledge on cases up for discussion and recommendation. Care must be taken, however, to avoid participation by too many or by unnecessary agencies as their inclusion serves more to add confusion to the proceedings than additional pertinent information and insight.

Sitting on the boards of all surveyed were representatives from the Juvenile division of the Police department and from the town Youth Services Bureau (who, in most cases, also served to chair the board); present in most others were people from Family Counselling Services and delegates from the probationary branch of the Juvenile Court system. Surprisingly, since contact with the youthful population is so great, representatives from the educational system did not occupy a full-time position on all boards; under such circumstances, school officials are aware of the board and its functioning and make their services available if necessary. Permanent representation on the board is preferable to this advisory position to the advisory board as this provides a more ready availability of the store of helpful information known to the school officials. Participation of the clergy in such an undertaking as these individuals are often

privity to familial conditions and relationships of whose existence the other officials would be completely uninformed, and whose existence may shed light on an otherwise mystifying situation. Inclusions of token town government officials is not really necessary, but some action in this respect might serve to foster a greater sense of responsibility and cooperation toward such a program within the governmental departments.

Although all boards should be as inclusive as possible, this applies especially to those functioning within large communities. Dealing with ten thousand possible offenders places much stricter time limitations upon such a program than with a juvenile population half that size; reviewing 3-5 cases per session permits such luxuries as compilation of extensive family and teacher reports before discussion of a case. When a review board is faced with ten cases or more during the course of a meeting, it is more time efficient if an "authority" on the child sits on the board thereby allowing an informed decision to be made without the time consuming interviews and histories. In some cases these may be unavoidable but should be undertaken only when necessary.



Some boards have found it preferable to include the arresting officer in the proceedings. The purpose is twofold: he is the individual most informed as to the exact facts of the incident, and might wish to voice his opinion. The chance to have his recommendation considered by the group may foster goodwill toward the group who he may otherwise consider useless, not understanding the rationale behind such programs, and bothersome because it creates more work for him. Besides the arresting officer, one board included youth officers, on a rotating basis, on the board. The chief juvenile officer, a permanent member of the board, his subordinates sit on the board for a few sessions, then are replaced by fellow officers. This experience is an educative one for the juvenile officers as well as an effective authoritative model for the youth (where offenders and their families attend board meetings addressed to their cases to receive the recommendation) to see a uniformed officer of the law involved in the proceedings.

#### Waivers or Permission Slips

Of all boards contacted, only five (Guilford, East Hartford, Enfield, Stratford and Hamden) operate without the use of a waiver or permission slip before hearing a case. These review boards operating essentially as an "arm of the police", feel that they possess the legal authority to discuss confidential matters within their ranks for the express purpose of advising the police on the appropriate course of action to be taken in each case. The opinion was also expressed that,

as the waiver must necessarily be administered at the initial contact with the parents of the offender, this would create more work for the officers of which group many harbor distrust toward do-gooder social agencies and would resent this imposition. Education of these officers as to the purposes and procedures identified with such review programs in order that they administer the permission slip most effectively and informatively has also been found to be time-consuming and often difficult, more easily achieved within smaller departments and with less-traditional officers. Such undertakings are not impossible, however, and in light of strict statutes governing confidentiality, waivers are often implemented as extra protection against the recourse of irate parents.

#### Referral Options

"...the [juvenile] statutes do not prescribe, as the criminal law does, that certain offenses shall be dealt with in certain ways --eg., 'three to ten years in the state prison'." (Merton, p.93)

"The chief manifest function of the juvenile [system] is to 'help children in trouble', to 'do what is in the child's best interests', to 'rehabilitate'. (Merton, p.92) Recognition that factors causing a particular individual to commit a delinquent act might be entirely different from those motivating another juvenile to perpetrate that same offense is necessitated in this situation; in order for the goal of rehabilitation to be reached, the importance of motivation and the needs of the child must be taken into account. The loose construction of the delinquency statutes facilitates such individualized attention to such details.

With relatively few legal restrictions placed upon the judgments of juvenile authorities, referrals made by Review Boards are limited mainly by the availability of appropriate agencies and programs. Recommendations taking into consideration both the motivations and needs of the apprehended juveniles, advocacy of referral to any established program whose services might prove rehabilitative to the youngster is justifiable. Recommendations regularly made by Review Boards in Connecticut include:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Counselling provided by
  - local Youth Service Bureau
  - Mental Health Center
  - Family Services Bureau
- Volunteer Service time
- Monetary restitution
- Big Brother/Sister/Friend
- CETA work experience program
- Wilderness School
- Traffic Safety Program
- Fire Education Program
- Shoplifting Seminars
- Job Bank
- Forestry Project
- Special education
- Essay or written apology
- Peer Counselling Groups
- Group Programs
- Leadership Club
- Recreation Groups
- YMCA/YWCA activities

- Adolescent Crisis Centers
  - (Sponsored by local Hospitals)
- Parental care
- Juvenile Court

Specific referral options differ from town to town according to the facilities available for use in the area; varying by preference of each board are referral regulations and processes. Boards differ in the degree of authority assumed to enforce the recommendations made. Shur states, "The key to the bureau's success

would be voluntary participation by the Juvenile and his family in working out and following a plan of service or rehabilitation." (Shur, p.63) Cooperation, however, is not always so easily gained, and in order to insure compliance with the rehabilitative measures, the threat of implied threat of court is often employed. The attitude of the board concerning its legal authority to enforce its recommendations correlates with the action taken. Functioning as an adjunct to the police department, many boards (among them East Hartford, Windsor and Southington) regard diversion as a privilege which is not to be abused. Not only does the family of the offender profit through this process by the chance to avoid the inconvenience of the court process, but the youngster is awarded the opportunity to maintain a clean record as well as the chance to atone for his indiscretion by restitution or rehabilitation. For such reason, a feasibility study is conducted before an alternative for court is proposed, in order to determine whether or not the offender and his family will cooperate with the prescribed plan. Also, an offender who takes advantage of the alternative program but reneges on its provisions or requirements is referred to the court system; such action is not considered "Double Jeopardy".

Considerable variation is evident in the manner in which each Review Board administers its recommendations. Innovations on procedures number as many as the communities involved; however, two basic systems prevail. One provides for personal contact with the offender and his guardians at the meeting where the case is discussed or where the disposition is reached. The other includes no such provision. In the first, an opportunity is extended to the offender to present his perceptions of the situation, to ask any questions regarding the proceedings or the disposition, to voice any reservations or indignations. While this may be seen as an unsettling experience, that in itself may provide a valuable lesson, and may also serve to open lines of communication that might otherwise remain untapped. It is of course imperative that deliberations as to the status of the case and the nature of the decision be held separately from the offender/board confrontation to promote free discussion. These deliberations may occur prior to the meeting with the family or between this session and the decision-making process; the second is more preferable, the encounter with the family possibly providing new perspective on the child's motivations and needs, but time considerations may render this alternative impractical. Boards following this for-

mat include Old Saybrook, Southington, and Farmington. This procedure is more feasible in the context of a smaller town where offenses are less in number and more time can be accorded each case. The mode of contact with the offender in the second situation is a letter informing the family of the recommendations of the Review Board. The letter typically begins with a description of the functions and purposes served by the Board, then continues with the referral(s) advocated by the members, these usually taking the form of a warning, a warning with added recommendations for taking advantage of various programs or counseling, or Juvenile Court. Depending upon the philosophy espoused by the reviewing committee (as discussed earlier) the notification may also contain a target date after which time one of three different plans of action may be initiated if contact has not yet been made with the recommended agency. A court summons may be issued, another contact, in the form of a telephone call may be made with the parents of the offender by either the review board or the recommended agency in an effort to prod them into taking some action, or nothing will be done until next time. The letter is often signed by the Chief of Police to impress upon those involved the seriousness of the offense and of the recommendations of the Board. Communities employing forms of this tactic include East Hartford, Stratford, New Britain, Windsor and Hamden, A reproduction of the form letter used in Stratford follows.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_

This is to inform you of the recommendation reached by the Family Resource Board with regard to the incident of \_\_\_\_\_ which took place at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ involving your son/daughter.

The Family Resource Board is composed of the Director of the Police Youth Division, a staff person from the School Attendance Office, Pupil Services, Stratford Community Services, Juvenile Court, Catholic Charities, Youth in Crisis Project and the Department of Youth Services. It is hoped that by early intervention into a juvenile's first problems with the police, underlying causes may be uncovered within the family setting and addressed, to prevent further penetration of juveniles into the juvenile justice system.

The Board meets biweekly to discuss offenses committed by juveniles in the Town from the previous two weeks. After reviewing the circumstances of the incident the Board reached the following recommendation:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It was the opinion of the Board that your son/daughter receive a warning rather than a referral to Juvenile Court.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. It was the opinion of the Board that your son/daughter receive a warning rather than a referral to Juvenile Court. In addition the Board strongly suggests that a contact with \_\_\_\_\_ would be beneficial to you and your son/daughter. You may contact \_\_\_\_\_ at the service by calling \_\_\_\_\_. If you do not follow-up on this referral by \_\_\_\_\_ this agency will be contacting you.

Variations upon this theme and upon the former procedure in order that the referrals conform to the particular needs of the community in which the committee functions.

#### Percentage diverted

Reported approximations of court-diverted cases range from fifteen (15) to ninety-five (95) percent. While it is possible that this wide diversity occurs as a result of the tendency of the majority of the Board toward punitive or toward rehabilitative measures, it more likely due to the practice of the local police department as regards screening. Although this seems to undermine the purpose and the effectiveness of the Review Board concept, some Police Youth Divisions first deem certain young-

sters appropriate for Juvenile Court attention; the rest are then relayed to the review board for further consideration and investigation. Obviously, those whose cases are screened before reception of the reviewing committee will be able to report greater numbers of diverted youths. High percentage rates, however, are not necessarily correlated with a successful board. The express purpose of the Review Board is not to divert as many cases as possible and to eventually supplant the traditional court system, but to ensure that the **most** appropriate measures are taken in response to delinquent transgressions--sometimes the most appropriate solution is the Juvenile Court.

In terms of broad interventions, the juvenile justice system should turn more to creating effective diversion programs that pick up on the youths' problems at the earliest point.

(Fcmig, p.201)

As instances of juvenile delinquency continue to increase, an alternative to the present situation is necessary in order to maintain the caseload of the Juvenile Court at a manageable level. Diversionary programs such as Juvenile Review Boards perform such a function while simultaneously providing rehabilitative services to those juveniles who might profit from such measures as opposed to those available through the traditional court proceedings. With more time and less-crowded, better-funded resources at their disposal than does the state, these programs have the potential to provide highly individualized assistance to delinquent youths, highly effective assistance. Review Boards may be one part of a viable solution to an urgent problem.



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