

Connecticut

Youth Service Bureaus:

July 2019-June 2021

*Positive Youth Development
Diversion from the Justice System,
And other Youth Development Services*

Evaluation report prepared by: The Charter Oak Group, LLC

for

Connecticut Department of Children and Families

December 2021

I. Executive Summary

This is the first biennial evaluation report of the Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) of Connecticut under the leadership of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), since the YSB program was transferred from the State Department of Education (SDE) in 2019.

Sec. 10-19m. (Formerly Sec. 17a-39). Youth service bureaus. Report. Regulations. (c) ...The commissioner shall, on December 1, 2011, and biennially thereafter, report to the General Assembly on the referral or diversion of children under the age of eighteen years from the juvenile justice system and the court system. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, the number of times any child is so diverted, the number of children diverted, the type of service provided to any such child, by whom such child was diverted, the ages of the children diverted and such other information and statistics as the General Assembly may request from time to time. Any such report shall contain no identifying information about any particular child.

Funding for the YSBs has remained relatively stable as has the number of youth and families served. In fiscal years 2020 and 2021 (FY2020 and FY2021), 102 YSBs participated in the state grant program, with a combined annual budget of just under \$18 million dollars. Approximately 20 percent of that total is from the DCF grant and enhancement supplement. The remainder of the budget is from the matching funds required from each municipality and additional funds leveraged by the YSBs, consisting of other state funds, federal funds, additional municipal funds, grants from foundations, and donations. There are 3 additional YSBs who chose, or were not yet eligible, to participate. They are not reflected in this report.

The data reported for these two program years is strongly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic that reached into nearly every aspect of life in Connecticut, as well as the rest of the United States and the world beginning in March 2020. Since much of the programming involves face-to-face experiences, the YSBs needed to adjust their strategies. Like the schools, every effort was made to use digitally mediated programs. The overall result, however, was significantly fewer youth were served throughout the period when youth were not in school and face-to-face activities were prohibited or severely limited.

To the degree possible, the YSBs continued to conduct two levels of programming, although large group events (Tier 1) were obviously eliminated during the period where quarantines were in effect. Tier 1 programming includes short-term events (e.g., an informational session on cyber bullying) and large group events (e.g., assemblies, family days); Tier 2 programming is longer-term (generally 20 hours or more), focused on youth development and intensive enough to have a potential impact on youth behavior and development in school and community. (e.g. JRB, counseling) Much of the analysis in this report focuses on the nature of the Tier 2 programs which are designed to provide prevention and intervention services to youth at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice or court systems.

For those served in FY2020 and FY2021, the demographics are largely consistent with those of previous years. Slightly more females than males participated. The age range has remained

consistent with previous years, 76 percent of the youth served being between 10 and 18 years of age. The percentages of minority youth were also similar to previous years. As far as referrals are concerned, parents and schools represented well over 60 percent of the referral sources in FY2020 and FY2021.

The majority of the Tier 2 programs and services continued to focus on positive youth development, a combination of prevention (e.g., Life Skills Training and Leadership Development) and intervention (e.g., Crisis Intervention, Individual, Group, and Family Therapy).

Not all the data has come from the administrative data from the Excel spreadsheets. In the past, there have been three surveys that speak to the quality and outcomes of the programming within the YSBs: Due to the pandemic, very few surveys were collected. Survey respondents were most likely to complete a survey when they were given the survey while on site. With the elimination of on-site services during the pandemic, digital survey administration was not a successful substitute. No survey data are available to be reported for these two program years.

An important extension of YSB services has been the Juvenile Review Boards (JRBs). JRBs have been expanding as a priority strategy designed to meet Connecticut's goal of diverting as many youth as possible from the juvenile justice and court systems. This leading-edge approach to diversion is not only supported by the YSBs in their individual communities but also promoted and supported statewide by the Department of Children and Families, State Department of Education and the Court Support Services Division of the Judiciary.

This report ends with a summary of the activities and outcomes for the Juvenile Review Boards (JRB). Most JRB are run by YSBs with their close involvement, while a small number are administered by non-profits or police departments. In nearly all of those cases, the YSBs participate in the JRBs. In many cases they refer the youth to a JRB and/or receive referrals from the JRB as part of the recommended interventions.

II. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

In 1978, Section 10-19o of the Connecticut General Statutes established Youth Service Bureaus (YSB). A YSB is defined in CGS 10-19m- 10-19q, inclusive, as an agency operated directly by one or more municipalities, or a private agency designated to act as an agent of one or more municipalities, for the purpose of evaluating, planning, coordinating and implementing services. Services include prevention and intervention programs for delinquent and pre-delinquent youth, pregnant and parenting youth, and troubled youth (Appendix A). The statute further states that YSBs shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide a comprehensive delivery of prevention and intervention, treatment and follow-up services.

Sec. 10-19m. (Formerly Sec. 17a-39). Youth service bureaus. Report. Regulations. (a) For the purposes of this section, “youth” means a person from birth to eighteen years of age. Any one or more municipalities or any one or more private youth-serving organizations, designated to act as agents of one or more municipalities, may establish a multipurpose youth service bureau for the purposes of evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of services, including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, predelinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youths referred to such bureau by schools, police, juvenile courts, adult courts, local youth-serving agencies, parents and self-referrals. A youth service bureau shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment and follow-up services.

YSBs offer a broader scope of services than most other youth-serving agencies. In addition to providing direct services like other agencies, YSBs are responsible for assessing the needs of youth, identifying gaps in services and coordination of services for youth to fill gaps and avoid duplication of services. Many YSBs also play a special role in working with the juvenile justice system to meet the needs of children and youth found to be delinquent by providing and/or making referrals to mental health services.

YSBs range in size and scope, from the smallest, staffed by a single part-time employee in a municipal office, to the largest, which is a private, nonprofit agency that provides a wide range of services to 10 municipalities. In a few communities, volunteers provide YSB administrative functions, thereby permitting the total YSB budget to be used for direct services. YSBs in larger cities focus their activities on administrative efforts that coordinate the many public and private providers in the community that offer a wide array of youth services. The coordination of these efforts helps to limit gaps in service and identify other resource needs, thereby assuring that the youth are being adequately served.

In 2017, the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) published a plan for the Youth Service Bureaus and the Juvenile Review Boards as a foundation for a community-based approach to diverting “children from the care of state agencies (Judicial Branch and/or Department of Children and Families).”¹ While the YSBs primary role is to provide services

¹ Community-Based Diversion System Plan. Submitted to the JJPOC by the Diversion Workgroup, Jan 10, 2017

aimed at prevention, YSBs also play a major role in treatment especially by providing referral to and making available clinical services. They also manage or serve as board members on nearly all of the Juvenile Review Boards in the state.

§§ 251-256 — YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS

Transfers responsibilities related to youth service bureaus from SDE to DCF.

The act transfers, from the State Department of Education (SDE) to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), responsibility for administering the youth service bureau (YSB) grant and enhancement grant programs. YSBs provide resources and community-based services and programs for children, youth, and their families. In doing so, it requires DCF to, among other things:

- 1. adopt regulations that establish minimum standards for YSBs and criteria to qualify for state cost-sharing grants;*
- 2. provide YSBs with (a) cost-sharing and other grants to cover certain related costs and (b) grant management services, program monitoring and evaluation, and technical assistance; and*
- 3. biennially report to the legislature on the referral or diversion of children younger than age 18 from the juvenile justice to adult criminal court system.*

The act also allows YSBs that applied for a grant during FY 19 to be eligible for such a grant through the program. Under prior law, YSBs had to (1) apply by the end of FY 18 and (2) receive approval for the town's contribution to the grant before applying. (The law requires towns to contribute an amount that matches the state grant.) Under existing law, the amount of grants payable to YSBs under the enhancement grant program must annually be reduced proportionately if the total grant amounts exceed the amount appropriated for them for that year. Starting in FY 20, the act additionally requires that the grant amounts be increased proportionately if the total for the fiscal year is less than the amount appropriated for the grants that year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

III. DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND FRAMEWORK

The General Assembly requires a report on the referral or diversion of children under the age of eighteen from the juvenile justice and court systems. The data presented below covers the numbers and types of children served, how they were referred to service, and the types of prevention and intervention services provided by the youth service bureaus. The concept of diversion is generally understood as a system's response to youth behavior, that is intended to address the underlying cause for the behavior in a non-punitive manner. While Juvenile Review Boards are universally recognized as a diversion intervention, a broader range of YSB services are increasingly being utilized in a diversion capacity. This is particularly relevant with youth referred to the YSBs for issues which, prior to PA 16-147, may have resulted in the filing of a Family with Service Needs (FWSN) petition in Juvenile Court. Youth referred by Court Support Services Division due to arrest or directly by police departments, can safely be considered formal diversion. However, other youth referred to YSBs due to problematic behaviors, while not at risk of referral to court, could be considered an upstream diversion. For instance, youth referred from schools will be a mix of formal diversion, intervention, and prevention. Ongoing efforts to improve data collection will allow us to better to discern between these.

In FYs 20 & 21, 102 YSBs, representing 141 towns, participated in the grant program and contributed data for this report. There are 2 additional YSBs who did not participate thus their data is not reflected in the report.

Data from administrative databases of youth participating in a wide range of YSB services were collected throughout the year. The data in this report for FY 2020 (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020) and FY 2021 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021) report provide clear evidence of the differences between activity before and after the pandemic started.

Tier 1 information is reported in summary form. There are two basic categories of Tier 1 activities on which we collect information: Smaller group activities, generally lasting less than 20 hours and Large group events such as assemblies, family days, and informational fairs. Generally, these activities, especially the large group events, do not capture individual participant information. All of the Tier 1 services are largely informational and focus on prevention.

The numbers of activities and participants reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of services. Even though many YSBs introduced online activities when face-to-face activities were not possible, the total number of activities and the volume of participants were significantly reduced. For large group events, the numbers of participants were cut in half. The small group activities were somewhat smaller.

FY2019 provides some context for how much even one quarter of COVID-19 in FY2020 could affect programs and services. FY2019 had 3,077 small group activities compared small group activities numbering 2,189 in FY2020 and 1,879 in FY2021. FY2019 over 92,000 youth participated in those small group activities. In FY2020 that number dropped to 61,715.

Summary of Youth Service Bureau Results 2019-2021

Tier 1 Activities FY2020 and FY2021

	FY2020		FY2021	
	# of Activities	# of Participants	# of Activities	# of Participants
Small Group Activities	2,189	61,715	1,879	58,601
Large Group Events	892	245,961	632	124,817

Tier 2 Activities FY2020 and FY2021

Tier 2 information is collected for each individual participant so that it can be analyzed and reported for policy and program management purposes.

As in previous years over 75 percent of the youth served are between the ages of 10 and 18. However, because of COVID-19, the number of youth participating in FY2020 dropped slightly to 16,812 from the FY2019 total of 17,132. And, it then dropped precipitously in FY2021 to 12,609.

Age

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
One	140	0.8%	0	0
Two	103	0.6%	82	0.7%
Three	94	0.6%	69	0.6%
Four	119	0.7%	95	0.8%
Five	296	1.8%	230	1.9%
Six	508	3.0%	347	2.9%
Seven	644	3.8%	465	3.9%
Eight	727	4.3%	490	4.1%
Nine	937	5.6%	492	4.1%
Ten	1137	6.8%	681	5.6%
Eleven	1375	8.2%	809	6.7%
Twelve	1616	9.6%	900	7.5%
Thirteen	1513	9.0%	900	7.5%
Fourteen	1671	9.9%	1006	8.3%
Fifteen	1598	9.5%	1301	10.8%
Sixteen	1546	9.2%	1347	11.2%
Seventeen	1585	9.4%	1428	11.8%
Eighteen	743	4.4%	807	6.7%
Nineteen	267	1.6%	308	2.6%
Twenty	108	0.6%	180	1.5%

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Twenty-one	85	0.5%	132	1.1%
Total	16,812	100%	12069	100%

The distribution of gender identities has always shown slightly more females than males. New gender identity categories of Non-Binary and Transgender have been added in recent years to provide a more accurate and complete picture of those who participate.

Gender

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Female	8626	51.3%	6364	52.6%
Male	8162	48.5%	5680	46.9%
Non-Binary	2	0.0%	1	0.0%
Transgender	29	0.2%	56	0.5%

The distribution of youth by race and ethnicity, collected as separate characteristics, are captured in the table below. The distributions are similar to those in previous years. The YSBs serve a diverse range of youth that closely resemble the diversity of the state's youth. According to Kids Count census estimates for 2019², children 0-18 break out in race and ethnicity as follows: 26% Hispanic, less than .5% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 5% Asian, 12% Black, 4% Multi-racial, and 53% White, Non-Hispanic. As evident in the Race and Ethnicity table below, the YSBs serve similar percentages of the youth population.

Race and Ethnicity

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	41	0.2%	0	0.0%
Asian	420	2.5%	367	3.0%
Black or African American	3536	21.0%	2483	20.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	21	0.1%	29	0.2%
White	8016	47.6%	6088	50.1%
Multiracial	995	5.9%	656	5.4%
Other	1094	6.5%	553	4.5%
Unknown	2711	16.1%	1980	16.3%

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent

² © 2008 The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Hispanic/Latino	4238	25.3%	2733	26.9%
Not Hispanic/Latino	10734	64.1%	7421	73.1%
Unknown	1781	10.6%	0	0.0%

As evident from the table below, the largest single group of youth are those from two parent households, somewhat less than 50 percent. Another quarter of the youth live with a single parent, most often the mother. The remaining quarter of youth served live in a variety of situations as enumerated below. In comparison, census estimates from Kids Count indicate that about 66% of families with children 0-18 are two parent households significantly more than represented in the YSB youth population.

Family Constellation

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
DCF Guardianship	93	0.6%	54	0.5%
Foster Parent(s)	83	0.6%	80	0.7%
Grandparent(s)	275	1.9%	341	3.0%
Joint Custody	542	3.7%	395	3.5%
On Own	--	--	56	0.5%
Relative/Guardian	161	1.1%	125	1.1%
Single Parent (female)	3433	23.3%	2495	22.1%
Single Parent (male)	333	2.3%	314	2.8%
Step and Birth Parents	883	6.0%	568	4.8%
Two Birth/Adoptive Parents	7038	47.8%	4760	42.1%
Other	112	0.8%	57	0.5%
Unknown	1772	12.0%	2636	23.3%

Homeless youth have been a matter of some focus in recent years. Of the 527,829 Connecticut public school children in 2018-2019, 2,905 (0.05%) experienced homelessness some time during that year. The categories in the table below are based on the McKinney-Vento³ definition of homelessness. As evident below, 81 (0.7%) children, who were in one of the homeless circumstances listed in the table below, were receiving Tier 2 services.

Homelessness

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Not homeless	12701	99.3%	9948	99.3%
Doubled up/shared housing	43	0.3%	44	0.4%
Homeless Shelter	32	0.3%	5	0.0%
Hotel/Motel	3	0.0%	18	0.2%

³ 42 USC CHAPTER 119, SUBCHAPTER VI, Part B: Education for Homeless Children and Youths

Unaccompanied youth	3	0.0%	3	0.0%
Unsheltered	3	0.0%	4	0.0%

The referral sources remain largely the same as in previous years with the two largest sources being the parent/guardian or the school. The one clear difference is the reduction in self referrals in from 22.3 percent to 14.2 percent, potentially because young people were stuck at home during the full year of the pandemic.

Referral Source

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
DCF	177	1.2%	170	1.5%
Juvenile Review Board	211	1.4%	110	1.0%
Parent/Guardian	5814	38.5%	4107	35.6%
Police	696	4.6%	429	3.7%
School	3550	23.5%	2632	22.8%
Self	3364	22.3%	1632	14.2%
Social Service Agency	149	1.0%	411	3.6%
Superior Court/Juvenile Matters	83	0.5%	110	1.0%
Other	1060	7.0%	1921	16.7%

The Tier 2 tab in the Excel data base captures up to four reasons why a referral source would refer a youth. The reason categories are listed in the table below. The reasons have been combined to provide a full picture of the types of events that precipitate a referral. The percentages total to over 100 percent since many of the youth have more than one and up to four reasons for being referred. The influence of COVID-19 can be seen specific areas: Non-school issues went from 5% to 7.5% of reasons. School issues went from 6.8% to 5.6%.

Reason for Referral

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Assault	2	0.0%	0	0%
Attempt or conspiracy	1	0.0%	0	0%
Beyond Control	159	1.1%	129	0.9%
Breach of peace	2	0.0%	0	0%
Bullying	120	0.8%	55	0.4%
Criminal mischief	8	0.1%	0	0%
Dating Violence	15	0.1%	12	0.1%
Defiance of School Rules	395	2.7%	205	1.4%
Delinquent Behavior	794	5.5%	576	3.8%

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Depression	567	3.9%	620	4.1%
Disorderly conduct	2	0.0%	0	0%
FWSN	62	0.4%	58	0.4%
Homelessness/At Risk of	62	0.4%	0	0.0%
Illegal drug possession	5	0.0%	48	0.3%
Indecent/Immoral Conduct	25	0.2%	0	0.0%
Internet Related	25	0.2%	3	0.0%
Larceny	5	0.0%	6	0.0%
Non-school Issues	718	5.0%	1132	7.5%
Parenting/Family Issues	1017	7.0%	1022	6.8%
Physical/Sexual Abuse/Neglect	54	0.4%	39	0.3%
Positive Youth Development	10707	73.9%	7924	52.6%
Possession of alcohol/liquor	3	0.0%	1	0.0%
Possession of paraphernalia	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Pregnancy/Teen Parent	6	0.0%	9	0.3%
Reckless endangerment	1	0.0%	27	0.12%
Running Away	18	0.1%	27	0.2%
School Issues	991	6.8%	840	5.6%
Substance Abuse	280	1.9%	9	0.1%
Sexual assault 4	0	0%	1	0.0%
Simple Trespass	0	0%	137	0.9%
Suicidal Behavior	99	0.7%	98	0.7%
Threatening	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
Truancy	362	2.5%	503	3.3%
Other	1494	10.3%	1580	10.5%

Finally, the Tier 2 tab in the data base captures as many as five different services that the YSB provides to each youth. As evident from the table below, COVID-19 had a significant impact on the delivery of some services. With classes being remote throughout FY2020, after-school programming was reduced by almost half as a percentage of all services provided. Similar to after-school programs, community service programs were greatly reduced. Another major change was in the number and percent of child welfare cases. Children were home rather than in school during FY2020 and it is possible that so much time as home for both parents and children may have lead to increased tension and stress, especially when many parents may have also been out of work during that time period. In addition, community service programs, since they require face-to-face contact in public setting were almost eliminated due to COVID.

Services Provided

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
After-school Programming	4255	28.9%	3059	15.3%
Behavioral health evaluation	1	0.0%	2	0.0%
Case Management	1563	10.6%	1248	6.2%
Child Welfare	144	1.0%	1248	6.2%
Community service programs	392	2.7%	3	0.0%
Crisis Intervention	336	2.3%	690	3.4%
Diversion	304	2.1%	137	0.7%
Employment/Training	1757	11.9%	2147	10.7%
Family Therapy	898	6.1%	920	4.6%
Group Therapy	493	3.3%	207	1.0%
Individual Therapy	2333	15.8%	2080	10.4%
Juvenile Review Board	713	4.8%	539	2.7%
Leadership Development	1611	10.9%	1830	9.2%
Life Skills Training	1539	10.4%	1575	7.9%
Mentoring	1352	9.2%	1231	6.2%
Positive Youth Development	1365	9.3%	1249	6.3%
Service Learning	264	1.8%	204	1.0%
Substance abuse evaluation	2	0.0%	4	0.0%
Substance use prevention/intervention	3	0.0%	0	0.0%
Summer Programs	2966	20.1%	1633	8.2%
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	35	0.2%	18	0.1%
Tutoring	2	0.0%	2	0.0%
Other	1547	10.5%	1542	7.7%

Summary of JRB Program Results 2019-2021

A Juvenile Review Board (JRB) is a community-based diversion process for youth that may otherwise be referred to the Juvenile Court. Although there is no specific enabling statute establishing a JRB, the Youth Service Bureau (YSB) JRB model has been in existence for 50 years in Connecticut. Absent a law mandating how a JRB must be established and operated, each community is able to establish and operate their program in a manner that meets the needs of the community, including the ability to amend the program as each community's needs change.

The following summary presents information about the youth who participated in the years FY2020 and FY2021.

The number served by the JRBs has been expanding as more JRBs have been established in Connecticut over the past five years and more funding has been provided specifically to support JRBs. Presently, there are about 90 active JRB, serving 135 communities. Many of these operate without the use of state funding, regardless of their affiliation with a YSB. The two years prior to FY2020, FY2018 and FY2019, about 2,000 youth were served. As shown in the table below FY2020 was slightly higher but that expansion was likely cut short by COVID-19 in the last quarter of the year when so much was closed down in the state. FY2021 shows full-year impact of COVID when youth served dropped by about 25 percent. Some JRB in smaller communities in particular, served no youth in FY21, and although a smaller number, in FY20. These JRB typically see only a handful of youth each year under regular circumstances.

Number Served

	FY2020	FY2021
	Count	Count
Total	2159	1476

The youth who are JRB participants are generally older on average than YSB participants.

Age

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent		
Five	1	0.0%	0	0%
Six	1	0.0%	0	0%
Seven	2	0.1%	1	0.1%
Eight	5	0.2%	5	0.3%
Nine	10	0.5%	4	0.3%
Ten	23	1.1%	9	0.6%
Eleven	49	2.3%	38	2.6%
Twelve	162	7.6%	95	6.5%

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent		
Thirteen	243	11.4%	173	11.8%
Fourteen	353	16.5%	267	18.3%
Fifteen	438	20.5%	283	19.3%
Sixteen	417	19.5%	273	18.7%
Seventeen	366	17.2%	273	18.7%
Eighteen	39	1.8%	38	2.6%
Nineteen	3	0.1%	4	0.3%

Unlike the gender distribution of YSB participants, JRB participants have a higher percentage of males than females, reflecting the fact that males are more frequently involved in the juvenile justice and court systems. These percentages are very similar to those over the past five years.

Gender

	FY2020		PY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Female	867	40.7%	560	38.1%
Male	1258	59.1%	901	61.3%
Transgender	4	0.2%	8	0.5%

Distribution by race and ethnicity are similar in YSB and JRB populations. There are a slightly larger proportion of Hispanic youth in the JRB program than in the YSB Tier 2 programs.

Race

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	5	0.3%	0	0.0%
Asian	23	1.3%	9	0.7%
Black or African American	679	37.6%	453	36.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0.1%	2	0.2%
White	838	46.4%	587	46.8%
Multiracial	152	8.4%	98	7.8%
Did not report	95	5.3%	50	4.0%

Ethnicity

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Not Hispanic/Latino	1309	62.1%	887	60.6%
Hispanic/Latino	733	34.8%	520	35.5%
Did not report	65	3.1%	0	0%

It is obvious from the table below that suspensions are common. The more typical year is FY2020 where over 60 percent of JRB participants were suspended in either the current, previous or both years. FY2021, when youth were not attending school in person show the dramatic decrease in suspensions and expulsions.

Suspensions and Expulsions

		FY2020		FY2021	
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Suspensions in current or previous year	No	697	37.4%	630	56.5%
	Yes both years	190	10.2%	81	7.3%
	Yes current year	648	34.8%	219	19.6%
	Yes previous year	160	8.6%	116	10.4%
	Did not report	168	9.0%	69	6.2%
Expulsion in current or previous year	No	1548	84.5%	1007	90.6%
	Yes both years	3	0.2%	3	0.3%
	Yes current year	88	4.8%	31	2.8%
	Yes previous year	31	1.7%	10	0.9%
	Did not report	162	8.8%	61	5.5%

The mix of services is quite different from those services provided to YSB Tier 2 youth. Case management for YSB youth account for 10 percent or less of all services provided. Case management for JRB youth accounts for 20 to 25 percent of all services provided. While the proportion of other services in the YSB and JRB are similar, JRB services are often distinguished by intensive management.

There are a wide variety of reasons youth are referred to the JRB. The table below identifies the types of incidents that led to a JRB referral in FY2020 and FY2021. In both years the most common reasons were Breach of Peace, Criminal Mischief, Disorderly Conduct, Illegal Drug Possession, Larceny and Assault. Most FWSN categories increased from FY2020 to FY2021, most notably Truancy with increased by 8%. The most common reasons are essentially the same as the most common reasons in in FY2019. There was no notable increase in the referral rate due to drug possession, despite the changes in cannabis legislation.

Incident Type

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent of Responses	Count	Percent of Responses
Assault	205	9.0%	119	6.7%
Attempt or conspiracy	26	1.1%	20	1.1%
Breach of peace	597	26.2%	332	18.6%
Credit card	1	0.0%	2	0.1%

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent of Responses	Count	Percent of Responses
Criminal mischief	107	4.7%	103	5.8%
Disorderly conduct	230	10.1%	152	8.5%
FWSN-Beyond control	7	0.3%	33	1.9%
FWSN-Defiance of school rules	62	2.6%	60	3.4%
FWSN-Immoral/indecent conduct	7	0.3%	2	0.1%
FWSN-Running away	0	0%	5	0.3%
FWSN-Sexual activities	0	0%	2	0.1%
FWSN-Truancy	67	2.9%	195	10.9%
Harassment	13	0.6%	11	0.6%
Illegal drug possession	219	9.6%	146	8.2%
Interfering	57	2.5%	40	2.2%
Intimidation based on bigotry	0	0%	1	0.1%
Larceny	321	14.1%	165	9.3%
Loitering	3	0.1%	2	0.1%
Misuse of emergency 911 system	0	0%	1	0.1%
Motor vehicle	6	0.3%	10	0.6%
Possession of alcohol/liquor	21	0.9%	16	0.9%
Possession of paraphernalia	93	4.1%	46	2.6%
Reckless endangerment	6	0.3%	11	0.6%
Sexual assault 4	4	0.2%	4	0.2%
Simple trespass	14	0.6%	14	0.8%
Strangulation	0	0%	1	0.1%
Threatening	82	3.6%	56	3.1%
Trespass	47	2.1%	56	3.1%
Underage smoking	22	1.0%	5	0.3%
Violation of town ordinance	2	0.1%	3	0.2%
Other	177	7.8%	168	9.4%
	2267		1781	

Services

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Academic support	6	0.1%	3	0.1%
Apology letter	399	8.1%	242	9.2%

Behavioral health evaluation	123	2.5%	99	3.8%
Case management	1014	20.5%	655	25.0%
Community service programs	542	11.0%	246	9.4%
Educational advocacy	234	4.7%	163	6.2%
Employment services	70	1.4%	54	2.1%
Essay	382	7.7%	168	6.4%
Family therapy	107	2.2%	87	3.3%
Group therapy	19	0.4%	7	0.3%
Individual therapy	475	9.6%	329	12.6%
Mediation	39	0.8%	16	0.6%
Mentoring	217	4.4%	164	6.3%
Parent/Guardian-administered drug/alcohol test	25	0.5%	18	0.7%
Positive youth development	718	14.5%	360	12.1%
Restitution	24	0.5%	21	0.8%
Substance abuse evaluation	109	2.2%	71	2.7%
Substance use prevention/intervention	72	1.5%	67	2.6%
Tutoring	56	1.1%	44	1.7%
Other	315	6.4%	162	6.2%

The needs of participating youth are varied and are addressed individually through the JRB process. While there are no standards for how many services are appropriate there are some small differences in the average number of services received by race and ethnicity. However, none of the differences in either year are statistically significant, indicating that neither race nor ethnicity influence the quantity of service delivery.

Number of Services by Race and Ethnicity

		FY2020		FY2021	
		Count	Mean	Count	Mean
Race	American Indian or Alaska Native	5	.4	0	.
	Asian	23	2.8	9	2.2
	Black or African American	679	2.3	453	1.9
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	2.5	2	3.0
	White	838	2.7	587	2.5
Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino	733	2.3	520	1.7
	Not Hispanic/Latino	1309	2.4	887	2.2

Completion is the one outcome currently tracked by the JRB system, since the survey administration that provided other outcomes was interrupted by COVID. As evident from the table below, COVID-19 seems to have had an impact on successful completion.

While most cases addressed by the JRB are completed within a given program year, a small percentage are carried over. In FY2020, a year largely unaffected by COVID, there were only 12.6 percent were carried over. In FY2021, when the pandemic’s influence covered a whole year’s programming, 18.1 percent.

The calculations below omit the carryovers, showing the distribution of closed cases only. There was a larger proportion of non-completions in FY2021 (27.2%) than in FY2020 (18.5%). As with service delivery, analyses were conducted to determine if there were disparities in successful completion among racial groups or between ethnicities. Neither analysis showed any disparities by racial or ethnic groups. All showed an equal likelihood of successful completion

Completion

	FY2020		FY2021	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes: Successful completion	1150	81.5%	573	72.8%
Non-completion: Arrest	42	3.0%	16	2.0%
Non-completion: Moved	19	1.3%	15	1.9%
Non-completion: Noncompliance	94	6.7%	69	8.8%
Non-completion: Other	57	4.0%	60	7.6%
Refused to complete	49	3.5%	54	6.9%

IV. CONCLUSION

Considering the data from the YSBs’ Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs, it is evident that the major finding is that COVID-19 had a significant impact on the number of youth served and the types of services offered. In the YSB, Tier 2 records, the number of youth in Summer Programs fell by more than half. Therapy was reduced in all categories, especially Group therapy. Certain programs, such as community service, were nearly eliminated in FY2021. These differences don’t change the fact that the YSBs provide a range of services to meet their community needs: a mix of prevention and interventions.

Despite the reduction in services, the participant characteristics remain stable. Youth are served proportionately in regard to race and ethnicity, relative to CT's population. And as in previous years females are a larger proportion of the youth served, 53% female to 47% male.

In the JRB programs, there were similar declines in the services and number of youth served. As to the JRB participant characteristics, there are more males than females, approximately 60/40 split. The JRB youth are also, on average older than YSB participants. FY 21 saw the successful completion rate drop by 9% to 72.8%. Non-compliance and refusal increased as reasons for unsuccessful discharge while rearrest dropped. The totality of the data suggests that COVID circumstances may have had a negative impact on the outcomes. As with the YSBs there is no evidence of disparities by race or ethnicity in service delivery or outcomes.

Given the increase in most FWSN categories being cited as reason for referral to JRB, particularly Truancy, continued outreach by YSB and expansion of partnerships with schools and law enforcement is warranted.

This report reflects a significant increase in reporting over prior years as well as improvements in accuracy of data. 100% of the YSBs who participated in the grant program submitted data in the required format and in a timely fashion to be included in this report. 100% of JRBs falling under a YSB, as well as a number of independent JRB, submitted data in the required format. Over the course of the last two reporting years refinements to the data collection tool have been made which will allow for capture of greater detail regarding demographics, family circumstances and services delivered. The analyses of these data also suggest several changes that could be made to the data base. One improvement to the data collection would involve revising the services lists in two way. First, “positive youth development” seems too broad a category to provide useful information about the actual types of service being provided. Creating specific categories or sub-categories would improve our understanding of the work being done in conjunction with the JRB process. Another improvement would be to address the fact that many youth coming into the JRB process are already receiving services that continue as part of the overall diversion strategy even though they are not defined within the JRB’s service plan for that youth. Capturing those services will provide a more accurate picture of the complement of services and interventions most likely to lead to successful JRB outcome. These improvements will increase our ability to identify youth being diverted at various points in the system and track outcomes, including recidivism.