

COMMONWEAL The Juvenile Justice Program

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Board of State and Community Corrections adopts “Principles of Juvenile Justice Development in California”

At its March 13 meeting, the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) adopted the following “Principles of Juvenile Justice Development in California”. The Principles Statement was developed by the Board’s Juvenile Justice Standing Committee (JJSC), with endorsement from the State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (SACJJD).

The Juvenile Justice Standing Committee is composed of California experts and professionals representing probation, prosecution, law enforcement, education, health/mental health, legal advocacy, youth service, private philanthropy and related disciplines. The JJSC is chaired by Board member and Commonwealth Juvenile Justice Program Director David Steinhart.

The JJSC felt that it was important for BSCC to acknowledge contemporary principles and practices underlying juvenile justice law, practice and policy both in California and throughout the United States. The ten point “Principles of Development” reflects policies and best-practices in the field based on recent research, developmental science, legislative changes and state and federal court decisions. As adopted the statement serves as a framework and a set of considerations to be taken into account in future juvenile justice funding, program and policy decisions made by the agency. A preamble to the ten listed principles describes these goals while making it clear that the principles as stated are not intended to impose new mandates or regulations on counties or providers.

The Board of State and Community Corrections has major funding, facility, data-collection and policy-making responsibilities affecting both the adult criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. Effective July 2012, BSCC replaced the former California Corrections Standards Authority with an expanded mission and revised mandates focused largely on the implementation of 2011 adult prison realignment in California. BSCC retains important juvenile justice mandates including regulation and inspection of local juvenile justice facilities, administration of major federal and state grant programs and related data-collection and juvenile justice realignment monitoring tasks. More information on BSCC and on the juvenile justice committees of the Board can be accessed on the agency website at www.bscc.ca.gov.

COMMONWEAL



**BOARD OF STATE AND
COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS**

JUVENILE JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

PRINCIPLES OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA

ADOPTED BY THE BSCC BOARD ON MARCH 13, 2014

This statement on “Principles of Juvenile Justice Development” was compiled by Juvenile Justice Standing Committee (JJSC) of the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). The 13 member committee includes juvenile justice practitioners and experts representing courts, law enforcement, probation, education, health, philanthropy, youth service and related disciplines. Membership of the committee may be viewed on the BSCC website at www.bscc.ca.gov.

When it established the Juvenile Justice Standing Committee in 2012, the BSCC Board approved a Scope of Work for the Committee. The Committee’s assigned tasks include identifying “leadership, program and policy issues deemed worthy of review” and “making sure that the Board is aware and fully-informed on best practices in the field, emerging state-national juvenile justice developments that deserve BSCC attention and other matters likely to enhance the capacity and productivity” of BSCC. This Statement was developed by the Committee in fulfillment of that assignment.

An important goal of the Principles Statement is to offer a roadmap or outline of modern law, science and professional practices that have become widely accepted in juvenile justice legal, professional and service sectors in America today. In this sense, the Statement acknowledges new findings in the science of adolescent development, recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, deeply-rooted principles of equity and non-discrimination and the concept that program development should be informed by data and, to the extent possible, by some sort of evidence-based criteria.

The Committee and the Board wish to make it clear that this Principles Statement is not intended to and does not seek to impose any new regulation, requirement or mandate on the agencies and individuals that constitute the juvenile justice system in California today. It is presented as a background statement and as a summary of modern trends in the field. It is also, to some extent, an aspirational statement about the processing, treatment, outcome and safety goals we hope to serve each time a young person becomes involved with the justice system.

In terms of program development, the Principles are presented as an outline of points that deserve attention in the process of formulating programs for children and youth under justice system control. In particular, the principles cited in relation to data development and

performance measures are included as statements of how the system could or should operate in a more efficient and more fully resourced future.

With these considerations in mind, the Juvenile Standing Committee, in cooperation with the State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, offers the following “Principles of Development” for the consideration of policymakers, juvenile justice stakeholders and others who may be interested.

Principles of Juvenile Justice Development in California

1. Juvenile justice system development in California should be oriented around the dual goals of promoting public safety and facilitating successful outcomes for youth over whom justice system control is asserted.
2. Juvenile justice system development in California should observe the principle of fair and equitable treatment of youth across differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and other individual characteristics. A related developmental principle is that state and local juvenile justice policy, programs and professionals should seek to reduce and eliminate system-based discrimination at all points from first contact through final disposition of each case.
3. Juvenile justice system interventions should be based, to the extent possible, on appropriate and validated risk and needs assessment of youth entering the system at multiple points of contact from arrest and referral through detention, placement, treatment, re-entry and probation supervision.
4. Juvenile justice system development should integrate evolving research including new findings in brain science and adolescent development, as increasingly acknowledged in key state and federal judicial decisions. The California system—including service providers, law enforcement, probation, courts and other decision-makers—should develop and use interventions and dispositions that are developmentally appropriate for individual youth.
5. Juvenile justice system interventions—including programs, facilities, placements, supervision and aftercare—should be monitored appropriately using standardized youth performance outcome measures for all California counties. These performance outcome measures should include, to the extent feasible, measures that go beyond simple recidivism by incorporating and addressing the broader developmental needs of youth under all forms of justice system control.
6. The programs and sanctions implemented by state and local juvenile justice agencies should meet minimum and consistent criteria for effectiveness. This means that publicly funded juvenile justice programs, facilities and services should be developed and implemented in a manner that is consistent with evidence-based principles for proven and promising practices. A coordinated and statewide effort by juvenile justice stakeholders is needed to guide the development of reasonable performance and quality assurance criteria for publicly funded juvenile justice programs, facilities and services.

7. Juvenile justice performance measures at all levels of intervention must be supported by adequate, modern data systems. Data, including data on caseloads and case outcomes, should be maintained and reported in a consistent and accessible manner at the local and state levels. California's data systems in this regard are presently inadequate, necessitating a further and perhaps substantial investment to modernize and coordinate new data capacity across multiple agencies at the state and local government levels.

8. Comprehensive aggregate data on the caseloads, operations, costs and outcomes of the California juvenile justice system, at the state and local levels, should be transparent and accessible to policymakers, stakeholders and members of the public. To the extent feasible, the information should be available through state-based websites, dashboards or clearinghouses where relevant information can be located and downloaded for multiple uses.

9. The development of a modern juvenile justice system in California should include plans for the delivery of adequate training and technical assistance to the justice system personnel and professionals who contact, serve, house, educate and supervise youth. The training and technical assistance should promote juvenile justice best-practices to guide system interventions and services. The training and TA approach should also include a focus on development of private and community based sector capacity to provide adjunctive and alternative-to-custody services in appropriate cases.

10. The development of juvenile justice policy, programs and performance measures in California should be based on input from a balanced array of system stakeholders, experts and professionals in the field including input from youth having personal juvenile justice system experience.

The Board of State and Community Corrections has an important role in the development and monitoring of juvenile justice programs and facilities in California. This role was further defined by the legislation that reconstituted the Corrections Standards Authority as the Board of State and Community Corrections in 2012, with a new mission statement and mandates including the following:

- To provide leadership, coordination and technical assistance to promote effective state and local efforts and partnerships in California's adult and juvenile criminal justice system...
- To promote a justice investment strategy that fits each county and is consistent with the integrated statewide goal of improve public safety through cost-effective, promising and evidence-based strategies...
- To seek and collect and make publicly available data and information reflecting the impact of state and community correctional, juvenile justice and gang-related policies and practices. (Penal Code Sections 6024, 6027).

To these ends, the Juvenile Justice Standing Committee is dedicated to a juvenile justice development strategy that will observe and help implement, to the extent possible, the principles stated above.