

D R A F T
Minutes
Juvenile Access Pilot Program Advisory Board
June 24, 2010 Meeting

Present: Judge Quinn, Sarah Eagan, Nancy Porter, Judge Keller, Justine Rakich-Kelly, Susan Pearlman, Elizabeth Duryea, Deborah Fuller, Justine Rakich-Kelly, Marilou Giovannucci, Anne Louise Blanchard

1. The meeting was convened at approximately 2:15 p.m. The minutes of the 4/5/10 meeting were approved.
2. Update on Implementation of Pilot Program

Judge Quinn reported that the Pilot Program rule was approved by the judges at their annual meeting.

Judge Keller provided an update from Judge Bentivegna, who is the presiding judge at the pilot program location. She reported the following comments:

- The preliminary pretrial conferences are not very useful;
- There have not been many motions to close, except when there are sexual abuse allegations. Since those are closed by rule, a motion is not really needed, but they have asked attorneys to file motions where there are allegations of sexual abuse to alert the court that the issue is present;
- The media continued to be frustrated with their inability to see the records – it discourages coverage.

Judge Keller stated that in light of the recent decision of Connecticut Supreme Court in Taylor F, it will be more difficult not to have the child testify. A discussion of this point ensued.

3. Updated Survey Information

Marilou Giovannucci presented a report on the responses to the survey. Unfortunately, the total number of responses received was low. A discussion took place of the fact that there are not enough responses or open proceedings to produce a statistically significant sample, so it will be difficult to use for the report. There was further discussion about the difficulty of measuring the possible harmful effect on children. Judge Keller pointed out that ultimately the Legislature would have to make the decision on whether or not to extend open courts based on very little empirical evidence.

4. Discussion of Next Steps

The drafting of the report(s) to the Legislature was discussed. Sarah stated that the recommendation could be to extend the pilot program and/or to expand it to another location.

A suggestion was made to hold focus groups to obtain additional feedback. The following suggestions were made:

- Judges at CPS, including any new judges assigned in September 2010
- All juvenile judges
- Youth – perhaps the DCF Youth Advisory Board. It was pointed out that we have polled every constituent but the children who are the subject of these cases.
- Anne Louise Blanchard suggested kids who have been or are involved in CPS cases during the pilot program.

The following suggestions were made as topics for the focus group with the CPS judges –

- Feedback on the Pilot Program Rule
- Ideas on implementing open court
- Opinion on expanding or changing location of the pilot program.

6. The next meeting was scheduled for September 23, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:40 p.m.