Operation Youth Success
Families Work Group Notes
Tuesday, January 16, 2018
9:00-11:00 AM
Heartland Workforce Solutions

Purpose Statement: Empower families to better understand the system and engage in their youth’s care.

Families Working Group Charter
- Empowering families to better understand the system
- Engage youth and families
- Seek help when needed

Introductions
- Present: Margaret Vacek, Joy Suder, Vivian Buckley, Shawne Coonfare, Jim Hubbard, Jennifer Beck, Judy Gutierrez, Michaela Jackson, Dwite Pedersen, Janee Pannkuk, Karla Dush, Amber Parker, Debora Faga

OYS Updates
- Catherine Rivier – OYS Data Analyst
- “No Name Calling” Week – materials passed out
- CBA Application was completed – has gone to the NE Crime Commission

Review
- Summary of last meeting’s activities
  - Passed out Douglas County Juvenile Justice System Family Guide
  - List of work group member emails passed out

Family Engagement 2.1
- Shawn Coonfare - Diversion
  - Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)
  - Stand-alone County department; report directly to Patrick Bloomingdale
  - When a youth is cited in Douglas County for any law enforcement violation or a formal truancy it goes to the County Attorney
  - County Attorney recognized a need for a decision-making entity, so the JAC came into being as a result of many blended grants in about 2003

Operation Youth Success is bringing people together to decide what aspects of juvenile justice in Douglas County need to change and how that change will happen.

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Across Douglas County, our vision is a comprehensive, coordinated, and community-wide approach to juvenile services that eliminates the need for youth involvement with our justice system while maintaining public safety.

For all youth who do enter our justice system, our goals are to provide effective, compassionate and individualized support that empowers youth and their families to succeed and to build an environment of mutual trust and accountability.
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- JAC performs formal assessment and screening in order to give recommendation back to the County Attorney for supervision and support for those youth
- Meet with the youth and the parent/guardian separately and together
- Different for truancy because they usually have a lot more information to start
- County Attorney makes final decisions
- If the youth successfully completes a diversionary process their record is sealed
- If they choose not to participate, their case file goes back to the County Attorney for further action, usually that means court
- If a youth is recommended for a warning letter, it is an automatic sealing of their record
- Diversion plans consist of whatever the youth needs
- Goal is to provide for the youth and the family the service they need; trying to encourage them to be in contact with their service provider
- Communicate with older youth directly
- Plans can be amended at any time

- Joy Suder - Court Hearing and Process
  - Private Attorney focusing on kids
  - Works with Case Processing – move kids through the system faster without sacrificing due process
  - Defense attorney is responsible for representing the expressed interest of their client
  - Guardian Ad Litem is responsible for representing what they feel is best for the child
  - Prosecutor is responsible for the state’s interest
  - Probation is responsible for providing supervision for the child
  - Families need to know:
    - The rights belong to the child
      - Their attorney tries to educate the child about their options and the consequences – “You control how long your case stays open”
    - Juvenile court is all about rehabilitation
    - Families need to be empowered to seek out solutions before it gets to the county level of services
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- Decision Making/Next Steps
  - Tabled to next meeting
- Public Comment
- Feedback Surveys – Handed out
- Gift Cards – Handed out
- Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 20, 2018