

Monmouth County Youth Services Commission

Minutes for April 7, 2026

4:00 PM First Floor Conference Room,

Human Services Building with Zoom Link Option Available

Attendance: Trude Arnette, Tara Buckley, Myra Carter, Stephanie Cella, Carlton Cummings, Achille Dejean, Chanta Jackson, Dustin Knoblauch, Honorable Lourdes Lucas, Prosecutor Raymond Santiago, Kaitlyn Silagyi, Ellen Cohen, Kathleen Peterson, Kayla Cunha

I. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING'S ACT

Judge Lourdes Lucas called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions of those in attendance took place. A motion was made, seconded and carried (Knoblauch:Peterson) to approve the Youth Services Commission meeting minutes from February 3, 2026.

II. YSC Co-Chairs Report

Prosecutor Raymond Santiago provided an update on the Restorative Justice Peer Mediation pilot program at Monmouth Regional High School and shared that there are new schools interested. Training will be offered for possible start up next school year. Districts who expressed interest include Keansburg, Asbury Park, Neptune City, Rumson and Manalapan-Englishtown.

The Monmouth County Juvenile Officers Association JOA and School Resource Officers meetings are being reinstituted. Information on crisis intervention, marijuana laws and other youth related topics will be included. The next meeting will be on June 18, 2026. Thomas Fichter can provide additional information.

Prosecutor Santiago stated that the Attorney General's Shore Working Group is not exclusive to juveniles but will include them, will train law enforcement.

Judge Lucas acknowledged the Prosecutor's Office and their efforts around Restorative Justice. She shared information received at a national conference concerning violent online networks/websites designed to cause harm to others and crimes against youth. There are red flags and warning signs to look out for to protect youth. Prosecutor Santiago stated that debriefs with the FBI have highlighted how youth are preyed upon. Inappropriate photos are used to blackmail victims.

Judge Lucas indicated the Consortium of Various Programs issued by the NJ Youth Justice Commission that can be brought into their facilities and the youth detention facilities was helpful.

III. Division of Child and Youth Services Report

Dustin Knoblauch reported that a presentation was given to the Youth Behavioral Health Quality Institute on Monmouth's Child and Family Crisis Diversion Program. The program was spotlighted for consideration of replication. Dustin Knoblauch reported that the Division of Child and Youth Services is looking to add a staff person to address the zero to 8-year-old age range. She shared that a recent provider event conducted, it was emphasized that gathering the youth voice in program design and implementation will be required in contracts. This year there will be the 10th Annual Children's Mental Health Awareness Event on May 16th from 5pm-8pm at Allaire Community Farms. Dustin shared some of the priority areas of focus that the Division of Child and Youth Services is working on.

IV. YSC Administrator's Update

Ellen Cohen shared that we received the Youth Justice Strategic Plan guidelines for January 2027-December 2029 from the NJ Youth Justice Commission. A draft timeline has been prepared to make their deadline for submission. A Core YSC Planning Committee will be formed to work on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan. Youth and family voices and perspectives will be integrated, and our current inventory of services will be reviewed. Updated data that supports recommendations developed will be utilized. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan focuses on the various points in the system as in other years (prevention, diversion, detention/detention alternatives, disposition and re-entry). Strategies to address racial/ethnic disparities are included. Outreach to key informants to help us with our process will be made. Ellen thanked individuals who have provided their updated statistics.

All 2026 contracts with YSC funded programs have been issued and entered in Juvenile Automated Management System. Programs are working on their first quarter narrative reports. 2026 YSC monitoring of funded programs will likely take place in June and July.

Ellen shared that the 2026 JDAI IF award packet was received and prepared for signature to be returned to the NJ Youth Justice Commission.

VI. Family Division

Tara Buckley indicated that there was not much to update the group on. She noted that there was going to be some staffing changes relative to court coordinators and support staff assigned to Judges within the Family Division.

VII. Probation Division-Juvenile Supervision

Myra Carter reported that there has been quite a bit of transition and staff changes within the Probation Division that they are experiencing. They lost a juvenile supervisor, and a new one has been assigned who has extensive background in recovery court. There will be cross

training with the senior probation officer and new staff who come on board relative to specialized caseloads. Myra Carter reported that there were 110 youths on probation supervision (26 deferred disposition and 18 SAB).

IV. New Business

Prosecutor Santiago reported that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 19-25, 2026. Several events (at the Child Advocacy Center and in Asbury Park) will be taking place in Monmouth County in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month and the National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

X. Old Business

XI. Public Comment

XII. Adjournment- The next meeting of the Monmouth County Youth Services Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 4:00 PM.