

Positive Youth Justice Initiative Year 2 Evaluation Findings: San Diego County

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San Diego County

This summary reviews the implementation of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in San Diego County during Year 2 of the initiative's implementation phase. The summary includes an overview of the County's implementation and structure; a synthesis of key strengths and challenges based on data from interviews, focus groups, staff surveys, and documentary data; and a description of results from the Year 2 youth and caregiver surveys and youth focus groups.

The Year 2 evaluation data collection included the following activities. The number in parentheses represents the number of respondents who participated in each of the activities. See **Error! Reference source not found.** for more detail about the evaluation participants.

- Key Informant Interviews with PYJI Leadership (8)
- Group interviews with PYJI Team (4)
- Key Informant Interviews with Wraparound providers (2)
- Staff Survey (33)
- Youth Survey (35)
- Caregiver Survey (23)
- Documentary Data

Implementation Plan and Structure

Implementation Plan

San Diego County's PYJI is led by the **San Diego County Probation Department** and housed within the Probation Department's Breaking Cycles division, a family-centered division with a team approach to juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention. San Diego County's PYJI is a pilot project that initially focused on neighborhoods within two zip codes with the highest number of youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. San Diego experienced unexpected difficulty identifying enough eligible youth to fill the participating probation officers' caseloads. Due to this challenge, San Diego expanded the geographic reach of their pilot to include a total of eight zip codes in Year 2 of implementation. The PYJI pilot program was designed to include four key staff members: two probation officers, a Youth and Family Counselor, and a Juvenile Recovery Specialist ("PYJI team").

Implementation Highlights

During the second year of PYJI implementation, San Diego County:

- Expanded the PYJI pilot program to serve a total of 8 zip codes
- Provided positive youth development (PYD) training to 23 staff
- Drafted the Incentives and Graduated Responses Matrix
- Continued to facilitate Family Involvement Team (FIT) meetings with the youth and families participating in the pilot program
- Updated probation templates for reporting to court to align with PYJI elements
- Attended Southeast Collaborative Meetings
- Conducted PYJI presentations at Breaking Cycles Program Manager's meeting, California Mental Health Council
- Finalized contract with Children's Initiative to create Customer Satisfaction Surveys and partner with school districts and workforce development programs

Each probation officer has their caseload limited to 25 youth, allowing a maximum of 50 youth to participate in the program at any one time. The pilot is intended to pave the way for countywide implementation in the future. San Diego's PYJI approach also includes a countywide training component for providers that work with crossover youth.

San Diego County's PYJI program was designed to complement the County's existing Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM); while CYPM youth have an active child welfare case (dual status), the County has defined PYJI youth as **youth in the probation system who have had prior contact with child welfare and are no longer receiving active services through a Child Welfare caseworker**. The Probation Department is currently developing a system to track the number of crossover youth based on its PYJI definition; currently, only those youth who are assigned to the PYJI pilot program are identified in the Probation data system. According to the Department's July 2015 data report, of the 4,712 youth on probation supervision in 2014, 41 participated in the PYJI pilot program.

Implementation Structure

The PYJI Leadership Team, which draws on existing structures built under the CYPM, is comprised of San Diego County Probation, Child Welfare Services (CWS), Behavioral Health Services (BHS), the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and representatives from three community-based organizations (CBOs). The leadership team convenes at the bi-monthly CYPM Guiding Coalition Workgroup meeting. The County established a subcommittee of the PYJI leadership team to develop and establish TIC training for staff. A team of Probation leadership meets weekly to discuss implementation progress and challenges, with participation from other members of the PYJI leadership team on an as needed basis.

San Diego County Key Strengths and Progress

- Collaboration with existing and new partners
- Integration of PYJI elements in pilot program
- Progress toward broader culture change

San Diego County Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Staff skills and training
- Collaboration within and beyond PYJI pilot
- Sustainability and expansion of PYJI model

Key Strengths and Progress in Implementation

Collaboration with Existing and New Partners

Similar to the Year 1 evaluation, in Year 2 County leadership described that the County has benefited from longstanding collaboration and philosophical alignment among leadership from County agencies, particularly Probation and Child Welfare Services. Leadership also continued to underscore the importance of having PYJI build upon the collaboration and team-based approach established through CYPM. Leadership from participating County agencies, PYJI team members, and staff survey respondents emphasized that interagency collaboration is a key strength of their County.

County leadership, PYJI team members, and staff survey respondents observed that while collaboration was already strong, PYJI has strengthened the collaborative relationships between the PYJI partner agencies. For example, County leadership and the PYJI team emphasized that including multiple PYJI partners in the Probation Department's TIC trainings supported relationship building and increased philosophical alignment between the different agencies and organizations serving crossover and PYJI youth. County leadership also described how regular collaborative meetings and PYJI presentations have helped partner agency leadership remain integrated in PYJI even though they are not involved in the daily implementation of the pilot program.

In order to reinforce interagency relationships and data sharing, Probation leadership also reported that the Department was considering developing an MOU between Probation and their educational and justice partners, including Health and Human Services, Public Defender, and District Attorney. In addition, the Probation Department recently finalized a contract with the Children's Initiative to assist Probation in establishing partnerships with workforce development programs and the school districts in the PYJI service area to increase awareness of crossover youth and identify additional services to support them.

All staff survey respondents in Year 2 reported that they at least somewhat agreed that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Diego collaborate effectively. Over half (53%) of probation respondents reported they agreed that the agencies and organizations collaborate effectively with 47% reporting they somewhat agreed. Fewer respondents from other PYJI partner agencies and CBOs reported they agreed (42% and 33% respectively), with most reporting they somewhat agreed (58% and 67% respectively).

Integration of PYJI Elements in Pilot Program

County leadership and PYJI team members noted several ways in which the San Diego PYJI pilot program offers a model for how probation supervision can better address the needs of youth who have experienced trauma due to circumstances in their family or neighborhood or their past involvement with child welfare. Thus far, three PYJI youth have successfully terminated probation. While the pilot program is still new, County leadership and the PYJI team reported that they believe participating in the program has benefited youth and their families and will help prevent youth from returning to the criminal justice system.

The pilot program integrates multiple components of PYJI in its service delivery, including a team-based approach, TIC and PYD practices, wraparound services, and youth- and family-centered care. County leadership and PYJI team members discussed how each of these components contributes to the success of the pilot program.

Team-Based Approach and Wraparound Services

County leadership and the PYJI team described that the members of the PYJI team and contracted wraparound providers take a team-based approach with the youth and families involved in PYJI. As part of this model, the youth's probation officer, the Juvenile Recovery Specialist, the Youth and Family Counselor, and any wraparound providers come together to developing a treatment plan and participate in Family Involvement Team (FIT) meetings with youth and their families. If a youth is receiving services from a wraparound provider, a Wraparound Care Coordinator works with the PYJI team to help coordinate the treatment plan. Probation leadership noted that Probation has expanded wraparound slots in Year 2 and plans to expand wrap slots further in Fiscal Year 2015-16.

"We get involved with what's going on with them at school...we actually go to the meeting and we integrate what's going on with the school and our case plan."

- Probation officer

Probation leadership and PYJI team members emphasized that the team-based approach is possible because the PYJI probation officers have smaller caseloads, which allows them to provide more attention to each youth and family and to engage in meetings with youths' school and wraparound providers. Smaller caseloads also enable the team to be more creative in supporting youth. For example, the Juvenile Recovery Specialist and Youth and Family Counselor started facilitating mock job interviews with youth to support them in accessing employment. Probation leadership and line staff commented:

I feel it works out well because you get three perspectives on how to help the youth. Having a united front for the youth, so they can see there are a whole bunch of different people here to help me.

We aren't just passing kids off to therapy or the wrap services team...we're still actively involved with the case manager on the wrap services and finding out how is the family dealing with these situations and are we giving them enough opportunities and skills to learn new ways of doing things.

Focus on Trauma-Informed Care

PYJI team members emphasized that approaching youth and families from a trauma-informed care (TIC) framework—as well as utilizing motivational interviewing and Integrative Behavioral Intervention Strategies (IBIS), approaches the Probation Department adopted prior to PYJI—shifts the focus from “What did you do wrong?” to “What happened to you?” and allows for a more empathetic response to youths' behavior. One probation officer shared:

*When we go out with them it's not just like, 'Hey how are you doing? You're fine? Okay.'
Now we are sitting down with them and talking to them and asking how school is going
and how are things going on at home and what are they doing during school break.*

The PYJI team also discussed how the implementation of a family support group extends the TIC approach by addressing family members' need for support and guidance:

[The group] is not only something for families to come and figure out these are the things that are going on with my child, but [also] gaining support from other parents that are going through some of the same situations to help them negotiate and navigate through this probation process.

PYD and Youth and Family Involvement

PYJI team members pointed to building relationships with youth and their families through the services described above is an important part of their role in supporting youth. PYJI team members also noted that the family services offered through the pilot program also have the potential to support a youth's siblings, who may also have a history of involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice system. PYJI team members described instances where they had the opportunity to work with a youth who had family members, typically a caregiver or sibling, with previous criminal justice interaction. PYJI team members explained how forging these relationships can be challenging, but that the PYJI model allows the family to have a different and more positive experience with these systems.

"It is showing that interest and showing that we actually care and that's the big piece, you are showing these youth that you care about them and you want them to do better and make changes."

- Probation officer

Wraparound providers proactively involve youth and families by assigning family and youth partners to the PYJI caseload. Their role is to provide emotional support and case management, assist families and youth in out of home placement when this arises, and support youth and families in having a voice in their treatment plan. Probation leadership and PYJI team members also explained that the program has provided youth with options for meeting court requirements that are more individualized and less expensive for the youth, such as completing an anti-theft or anger management curriculum with their therapist over the course of several sessions rather than attending a one-day training. Probation leadership also tasked the Children's Initiative with creating entry and exit Customer Satisfaction Surveys to administer to the youth and families participating in the pilot program.

Progress toward Broader Culture Change

County-Wide Training and Policies and Procedures

In addition to implementing the PYJI pilot program, the Probation Department has worked to integrate the PYJI philosophy and approach across the Department and other agencies by providing TIC training to its staff and partners. In Year 2, the Probation Department provided TIC training to 434 staff, mostly

from its Juvenile, Adult, and Institutions division as well as its community partners. In January, the department trained 23 staff, including the PYJI pilot program team, in PYD. Probation is considering implementing a train-the-trainer approach to build staff capacity in PYD principles. The PYJI team has also participated in webinars on topics relevant to their role in the program.

County leadership and PYJI team members reported that the TIC trainings have increased their awareness of the trauma and mental health issues experienced by the individuals involved in the justice system and have helped the juvenile justice system partners perceive youth differently. (Very few probation officers not directly involved with the PYJI pilot program participated in the evaluation, so it is only possible to report County leadership and partners' perspectives on these changes.) One wraparound provider observed that as a department, *"The Probation Department has been a lot more collaborative with our wraparound program recently,"* noting greater participation from probation officers in service coordination and team-based meetings. Leadership from a PYJI partner agency shared:

I think the introduction of TIC has really opened people's eyes in the court...and the justice system to a different way of looking at the behaviors of youth, and there really is a big focus on diversion with our youth. [The training has] broadened everyone's thoughts of when someone needs to be in the juvenile justice system.

Staff surveys (which included several non-PYJI probation officers) also corroborated that San Diego has begun to establish buy-in for PYJI among broader Probation staff and other County and CBO partners. All staff survey respondents at least somewhat agreed that PYJI has the potential to advance juvenile justice system policy and practice. The majority of Probation respondents reported that they somewhat agreed (50%) or agreed (33%) that the changes due to PYJI will personally benefit them in their work, with 17% indicating that they did not know if the changes would benefit them. All respondents from other PYJI partner agencies somewhat agreed (30%) or agreed (70%) that PYJI would personally benefit them. Likewise, most CBO respondents somewhat agreed (17%) or agreed (67%), with 17% reporting they did not know.

In Year 2, Probation Department also made progress in developing an Incentives and Graduated Response Matrix that its plans to implement throughout its Juvenile Division. The Probation Department also built its community resource directory into its case management system, allowing for a more streamlined referral process that ensures probation officers refer youth to the intended programs and helps hold contracted agencies accountable. Apart from but related to PYJI, Probation leadership explained that the Probation Department has also helped to support culture change through its performance appraisal process, which includes opportunities for supervisors to monitor interactions between deputy probation officers and the youth on their caseloads.

County leadership were generally positive about the data sharing occurring between Probation, Health and Human Services, and the other PYJI partner agencies. County leadership and PYJI team members affirmed that they were able to access the data relevant to their roles and agency, whether it be for administrative planning or case management. All Probation survey respondents somewhat agreed (47%) or agreed (53%) that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Diego collect and

share data effectively. Survey respondents from CBOs and County agencies beyond Probation were less positive about the County's current data sharing, but still most respondents reported that they at least somewhat agreed. Over half (58%) of respondents from other agencies somewhat agreed (58%), with 33% indicating they agreed (33%) and 8% indicating they somewhat disagreed. Only 17% of CBO respondents reported they agreed, with 83% reporting they somewhat agreed.

Expansion of PYJI Model beyond Pilot Area

County leadership, PYJI team members, and staff survey respondents emphasized that they would like to see the PYJI pilot program model expanded throughout the county. Probation leadership and PYJI team members identified the team-based approach as a key element that could be incorporated into general supervision. County leadership generally voiced agreement that San Diego is "well positioned" to promote the sustainability and expansion of the PYJI pilot program. San Diego also has firm support for juvenile justice reform from the Board of Supervisors, particularly Supervisor Ron Roberts who oversees the district that includes the PYJI pilot program zip codes.

In addition to San Diego's history of juvenile justice and child welfare reform efforts, the County is currently engaged in multiple new initiatives that complement and support its PYJI goals, including Title IV funding that will increase the wraparound service slots available, and a State of California Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) grant that will support the administration of the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAISY) to assess the behavioral health needs of all youth entering the system. Probation is also working to establish an in-custody Juvenile Justice Mental Health Specialty Unit to better support youth with intensive mental health needs, and the County is partnering with a community partner to establish intensive mental health services in the community. Leadership also emphasized that San Diego has invested in studying decision points in the system that contribute to racial/ethnic disparities and implemented programs to address these failings, such as a Cultural Broker Program that provides support to African American families involved in the child welfare system by acting as a "translator" between families and their social worker.

Challenges and Opportunities

Staff Skills and Training

While County leadership and PYJI team members noted that the TIC and PYD trainings facilitated by the Probation Department have increased awareness of the trauma and mental health issues experienced by many youth on probation, the PYJI team reported that additional training is needed to support the implementation of TIC and PYD practices in their daily work with crossover youth. PYJI team members discussed the need for support and training related to vicarious trauma and how staff can engage in self-care practices to cope with hearing about the traumatic experiences of the youth and families they serve:

We should definitely have training in self-care. People are at a loss of what [to] do. How does a department on a day-to-day basis help support people working in the office, knowing what they hear and see with their cases?

Leadership connected to the Court system described the need for TIC training that is specific to law enforcement and the court that would provide police officers, lawyers, and judges with an understanding of how their language and actions can impact youth along with strategies for utilizing TIC practices in their specific roles. PYJI team members also voiced a need for additional trainings on PYD that focus on practical strategies that staff can utilize to implement PYD: *“What are the specific practical steps, other than the verbal encouragement?”* PYJI team members also noted that they have requested training on wraparound service delivery.

“What are the specific practical steps, other than the verbal encouragement?”

- Probation officer

Staff survey responses also showed while all Probation line staff agreed that they feel well trained to implement TIC practices in their work with crossover youth, the majority reported that they somewhat agreed (63%) rather than agreed (38%). Similarly, half of Probation line staff reported that they somewhat agreed (50%) that they feel well trained to provide PYD-informed services, with 38% indicating that they agreed and 13% indicating that they somewhat disagreed. Compared

to Probation staff, staff from other County agencies offered lower levels of agreement that they felt well trained to support crossover youth.

Collaboration within and beyond PYJI Pilot

Challenges due to Staffing Changes

County leadership and PYJI team members addressed the impact of staffing changes early in the implementation period, as Probation staff in three key leadership positions retired. County leadership acknowledged that this staff turnover impacted the rate of progress the County was able to make toward its PYJI goals, citing the loss of institutional knowledge and the time needed to train and onboard new staff to their roles within PYJI as factors impacting implementation. County leadership attributed the success of the PYJI pilot program despite the leadership turnover to the dedication, commitment, and stability of the PYJI team. PYJI team members as well as County leadership believed that now that there is stable staffing, the department is in a better position to move the initiative forward:

The probation officers have stayed constant. [They are] highly committed to this approach and model and motivated, as well as their team members. That is one way we’ve been able to withstand the turnover. [I’m] not saying it hasn’t slowed us down, because it has in some areas, but staff involved haven’t waived in their commitment.

At the same time, PYJI team members recalled at times feeling like “a boat on our own,” and conveyed that they would have benefited from greater “communication and direction from leadership” related to the procedures they were supposed to follow under the PYJI pilot program, such as how to respond to probation violations and provide incentives within the PYJI framework. PYJI team members also expressed anxiety regarding the future of the PYJI pilot program after PYJI Phase I ends in October.

Defining Roles on Executive Team

While PYJI leadership generally believed that CYPM, PYJI, and other collaborative efforts have helped County agencies move toward a more united philosophy around justice-involved youth, some County leadership identified continued challenges in defining the roles of the different agencies involved in PYJI. One member of PYJI leadership explained that defining each agency's role is important to prevent *"problems due to lack of understanding and misunderstanding of some statutory obligations and mission mandates."* Leadership from Health and Human Services felt some confusion regarding the role of Child Welfare Services in PYJI implementation, given that PYJI youth are not currently active in the child welfare system. While Child Welfare Services remains involved as a PYJI partner agency through attending meetings and participating in planning and strategizing, leadership noted that it remains unclear in what capacity, if at all, social workers in the child welfare system should be involved in the pilot program implementation:

One of the things that wasn't clear to me last year that isn't clear this year...is you have a youth that's active to probation that has had a child welfare experience or placement, but is not currently involved with us, so when we come to the table to support, what are we there to say? Are we looking historically at their last case plan? Their record with us? Do we interject based on what their experience has been? That part hasn't been 100% clear to me.

Role of and Coordination with Wraparound Providers

Among the PYJI team, staff generally felt that they have been able to effectively define and communicate each team member's role in supporting the youth and their family. However, they discussed some challenges related to defining the role of the wraparound providers in relation to the roles of the probation officer, Juvenile Recovery Specialist, and Youth and Family Counselor. One wraparound provider explained that additional coordination would benefit youth who are receiving services from multiple providers:

[We're] trying to make more distinction between the probation officer and wraparound providers and everyone else involved. It sort of seems that the [PYJI] youth I worked with had a lot of different people. He had a therapist through PYJI, a substance abuse person through PYJI, a probation officer, and then there was us with our wrap team, which was me and a skills trainer he worked with. [There are] a lot of moving parts, and coordinating better would have probably made a little more sense for him.

County-Wide Coordination beyond Pilot Program

PYJI team members, wraparound providers, and staff survey respondents reported that team-based case planning and collaboration are less consistent outside of the PYJI pilot program. One wraparound provider explained that the level of involvement of probation officers can vary greatly and that communication "gets more sporadic" when additional organizations beyond probation are involved. PYJI team members and wraparound providers emphasized that outside of PYJI, probation officers' caseloads

can limit their ability to participate in multidisciplinary team meetings and engage collaboratively with line staff from other agencies, such as child welfare, wrap providers, and schools. One wraparound provider also noted that in some situations youth are not assigned to a specific probation officer, but are rather supervised by whichever probation officer is available at a particular time, which hinders a coordinated approach to services.

“The [PYJI] youth I worked with had a lot of different people.... [There are] a lot of moving parts, and coordinating better would have probably made a little more sense for him.

– CBO line staff

PYJI team members and wraparound providers noted that communication about a youth’s case may not always involve all of the parties who could provide beneficial input. They noted areas where some partners were missing from the table, as well as other instances of miscommunication, which they felt ultimately resulted in youths’ needs not being met. PYJI team members and wraparound providers explained:

It is obvious there is collaboration among various agencies. As time goes on, the CYPM, PYJI is improving. Yet there are also occasions where the collaboration is limited to only a couple of folks rather than a team of individuals who have information about a youth... such as CASA, teacher/school and others who have had interactions with the youth beyond a social worker and probation officer.

There is sometimes miscommunication between departments. Some do more and some less than others. Depending on the need of youth, for example, sometimes youth are having some mental health issues that need to be addressed, but that [is] not given the priority because of the situation or funding or other issues.

Data Collection, Sharing, and Use

Interviews with Probation leadership and PYJI team members suggested that while data sharing is occurring, a formal approach to multi-system data sharing, particularly at the case management level, has not been established. PYJI team members explained that while Probation staff involved in CYPM have direct access to Child Welfare’s case management system, PYJI staff do not. Instead, PYJI staff receive a brief description of a youth’s history with Child Welfare Services (CWS), but do not receive information regarding the outcome of CWS investigations or the extent and type of contact youth had with the child welfare system. PYJI team members specified that having this information would be beneficial because they could “understand what kind of services and tools that we are helping them gain to overcome the trauma and history that probably led them to that criminal behavior.” They also explained that they do not want to put youth in the position to recount their own history.

At the time of the implementation plan, TA providers recommended that the County develop a mechanism to identify and track the number of crossover youth in the juvenile justice system. While Probation created fields in the Probation Case management System (PCMS) to flag whether youth are participating in the PYJI or CYPM programs, the department has not established a mechanism to track youth who are eligible, but not currently enrolled in the PYJI program. Probation leadership noted that

the County has also experienced delays incorporating its new risk assessment tool that was developed by the San Diego Risk and Resiliency Committee into its PCMS due to limited IT staffing capacity.

Sustainability and Expansion of PYJI Model

While San Diego has a number of ongoing and new efforts that lay a foundation for expanding PYJI, one challenge to expansion that County leadership identified is how to effectively communicate about PYJI more broadly to ensure all line staff, as well as leadership, are aware and familiar with the PYJI program and principles. Interviews with leadership, the PYJI team, and wraparound providers suggested that line staff, including wraparound providers and child welfare case workers, only become aware of PYJI through their interactions with the PYJI team and that their understanding can be superficial. Along these lines, a higher percent of director- and manager-level respondents (64%) than line staff respondents (46%) reported that they agreed that PYJI has the potential to advance juvenile justice system policy and practice. Even more pronounced, 86% of director- and manager-level respondents agreed that PYJI brings needed changes to their county, compared to 39% of line staff.

Interview participants also observed gaps in the services available to youth on probation. County leadership, PYJI team members, wraparound providers, and staff survey respondents stated that there are limited resources available to address the transportation, food, housing, mental health, job training, recreational and sports opportunities, and mentorship needs of youth and their families:

There is a big gap there with the 17/18/19 year old population. [They] leave their parents' home, but don't necessarily have a good place to go to get on their feet. [We need more] programs to provide the skills they need to be successful adults.

Youth and Caregiver Experiences

Thirty-five youth and 23 caregivers responded to the survey. Nine youth participated in the youth focus group.

Key Findings

- Across youth serving systems, youth and caregivers generally affirmed that the staff with whom they interact want things to go well for youth.
- However, their responses indicate minimal consistency across and within systems in how these adults treat and approach youth.
- Across all areas, youth tended to share more negative feedback in focus groups than in the youth surveys, and youth communicated more negative feelings than caregivers.

Experience with Juvenile Justice System

Youth and caregivers shared mixed experiences with the juvenile justice system, expressing more positive experiences with supervisory probation officers compared to judges and probation officers in

juvenile hall. While many youth and caregivers indicated that staff in the juvenile justice system want things to go well for youth, over one-third also perceived their treatment to be unfair or inconsistent.

The majority of survey respondents indicated that supervisory probation officers were supportive and used a team-based approach.

- Most youth (80%) and caregivers (90%) responded that it is very true or mostly true that their/their child's probation officer wants things to go well for them/their child.
- Almost all youth (94%) and caregivers (95%) indicated that their/their child's probation officer tells them/their child about programs that might be helpful to them—a question designed to capture whether staff exemplified a PYD approach.
- Over three-quarters of youth (78%) and caregivers (86%) suggested that it is very true or mostly true that probation officers talk with them/their child about how what they have been through affects them—a question designed to capture whether staff exemplified a TIC approach.
- Almost all youth (97%) and caregivers (91%) reported always or sometimes having a caregiver present when they/their child meet with their probation officer, and over half of youth (55%) and caregivers (62%) reported that they always or sometimes have someone other than themselves (mentors, therapists, social workers, and teachers) at probation meetings.

Survey respondents conveyed that their experiences in court and juvenile hall were less supportive than experiences with out-of-custody probation officers, although a majority still conveyed positive responses.

- Over three-quarters of youth (76%) and caregivers (86%) indicated that it is very true or mostly true that the decision the judge made on their/their child's case was fair.
- More than half of youth (64%) and 86% of caregivers reported that it is very true or mostly true that the judge listens to them/their child when making decisions.
- Over three-quarters of youth (76%) and caregivers (80%) reported that it is very true or mostly true that the judge listens to their family when making decisions.
- Approximately three-quarters of youth (76%) who had been in juvenile hall conveyed that it is mostly true or somewhat true that officers in juvenile hall want them to succeed, and over half (62%) conveyed the same about having talked with an officer about a plan for when they got out. Over eighty percent of youth (86%) also indicated that it is very true or mostly true that they had an officer or other staff person they could go to in juvenile hall.

Overall, caregivers' survey responses echoed youth responses, but were somewhat more positive. For instance, a higher percentage of caregivers stated that probation officers want things to go well for their child, that the decision the judge made on their child's case was fair, and that officers talked to their child about a plan for when they got out of juvenile hall.

In contrast to survey responses, youth perceptions in the December 2014 youth focus group were predominantly negative. Focus group participants shared mostly negative experiences with probation

officers, noting that they do not have significant relationships with their probation officers and that their probation officers do not ask for their input when making decisions (although focus group participants were asked to speak about their current experience with probation, it is possible that some reflected on past experiences with probation officers, rather than their PYJI probation officers). Youth also observed that judges and juvenile hall staff tend to treat youth in an unfair and punitive manner.

Experience with School

Youth and caregivers reported mixed experiences as well as limited consistency in how teachers and adults at school respond to youth, and focus group participants expressed some negative experiences. While many youth and caregivers indicated that adults at school want things to go well for youth, they less frequently reported that adults at school actively support youth by talking with them about their life or programs they might join.

- Over half of youth (58%) and over three-quarters of caregivers (86%) responded that it is very true or mostly true that there are teachers or other adults at school that want things to go well for them/their child.
- Approximately half of youth (49%) and one-quarter of caregivers (24%) indicated that it is not at all true or only a little true that a teacher or another adult talks with them about how their/their child's life experiences have affected them.
- More than one-third of youth (39%) and nearly one-third of caregivers (29%) expressed that it is not at all true or only a little true that a teacher or another adult at school informs them of programs that may help them.

In focus groups, students' responses about their experiences with teachers were also mixed. On the one hand, some student focus group participants reported that many teachers were aware of their probation status and treated them differently as a result, including calling or threatening to call their probation officers rather than a parent or caregiver when they got in trouble. On the other hand, some participants noted that some of their teachers encourage them to do well in school and to pursue college.

Experience with Programs

Youth and caregivers indicated some inclusion in decision making about the programs youth participate in, this despite the majority conveying that a judge or their (their child's) probation officer decided which programs they (their child) would participate in.

- Almost all program participants (97%) and 80% of caregivers indicated that a judge or their/their child's probation officers decided which programs youth participated in.

These findings align with those from focus groups where youth reported that they did not have much choice in the programs they participated in.

- At the same time, over half of youth (56%) and 40% of caregivers said that youth helped decide what programs they would participate in, and nearly two-thirds of youth (61%) and caregivers (65%) said that caregivers helped decide what programs youth would participate in.

Responses were mixed regarding the extent to which programs had been helpful, although ultimately a majority of youth noted that program services helped them. Among youth participating in programs:

- Nearly three-quarters (70%) suggested that it is very true or mostly true that the programs they are (or were) involved with are a good fit.
- Two-thirds (67%) indicated that it is very true or mostly true that the programs that they are (or were) involved with help them build skills for the future.
- Over half (60%) suggested that it is very true or mostly true that the programs they are (or were) involved with help them do better in school and improve their relationships with family.
- Half (50%) said that it is very true or mostly true that program services helped them to become more involved in the community.

This contradicted some of what youth shared in focus groups, where some youth explained that their programs were not tailored to their offenses or needs. Caregivers conveyed similar overall sentiments to youth, although their responses indicated that they viewed program services as somewhat more beneficial than what youth perceived them to be. For instance, almost all caregivers responded that it is mostly true or very true that their child has access to programs and services that help him/her to be emotionally healthy (95%) and to do well in school (90%).

Overall Support from Adults

Overall youth stated that they felt supported and respected by the adults in their life, though the extent to which they felt respected varied. In regard to whether the adults in their life respect them:

- Nearly one-quarter (21%) responded a little bit true, 41% responded mostly true, and 38% responded very true.
- Almost all youth (94%) agreed it is mostly true or very true that if they need help in school they know where to find it.
- Over three-quarters youth (82%) indicated that it is mostly true or very true that when they are feeling sad or lonely there are people they can talk to.