



**MISSISSIPPI JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

WWW.MSJAC.ORG

Alfred Martin, Ph.D., Chairman

Jaqueline Dedeaux, Vice Chair

Katrina Phillips, Secretary

2026 – 1st QUARTER MINUTES

DATE: Friday, January 9, 2026

LOCATION: Zoom Only

Meeting Called to Order: 10:02 a.m. by Chairman Dr. Alfred Martin

ROLL CALL: Quorum established with 16 present, 1 guest

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the 4th Quarter meeting were distributed. The motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Tia Grisham, and Christina Jacobs seconded. The motion carried unanimously. No one abstained.

AGENDA ITEMS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Conference: Dr. Martin explained that Mark Fomby, FTC Prevention Services, will continue as the conference planner but will not receive direct payment. The state advisory group's funds will cover speaker fees, paid directly to the speakers, and all SAG member expenses for attending the conference. These funds are part of the \$25,000 allocation agreed upon at the retreat.

Payments to the speakers will be made directly by DPS to ensure financial transparency. This approach preserves other budget funds for grant distribution, directing more funds into field programs rather than administrative costs. He further clarified that FTC's compensation comes from registrations and sponsors, not SAG funds, and that Mark accepted the new arrangement after concerns about his prior losses. A conference planning meeting will be scheduled within one to two weeks to finalize logistics and address any outstanding questions.

Next meeting: The second-quarter meeting is scheduled for April 10th at Piney Woods School. Travel requests need to be submitted 45 to 60 days in advance to ensure approval.

Data Access and Conflict of Interest: The group addressed ongoing challenges in obtaining MYCIDS data for statewide juvenile justice reporting, stemming from Vicki Lowry's restrictive interpretation of data-sharing laws at AOC, which affected the production of annual reports and federal compliance.



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Angela Robertson reported that AOC now requires court orders from all 82 youth court judges to access data, which is practically unfeasible and delays reporting.

Positive progress came from Josh Broman securing a December 10 meeting with AOC, during which AOC acknowledged the need to identify a solution to provide data that meets federal reporting requirements.

Toni Kersh confirmed that the relevant state statute was shared with AOC, but interpretations differ, necessitating continued negotiation and a blanket court order from Judge Bevel to ease access.

Dr. Robertson moved to have a conflict-of-interest policy developed. Don 2nd. Motion carried unanimously. No one abstained.

Staffing and Grant Administration Challenges: The group highlighted severe staffing shortages and operational inefficiencies in DPS Public Safety Planning, resulting in delayed grant reimbursements, poor communication, and insufficient program oversight. Alfred Martin met with Terrica Houston and reported that they were unable to locate contracts for the current grantees and had not received any reimbursement requests. Canopy reported to a SAG member that they had not received a payment in March. DPS currently lacks a dedicated Title 2 Specialist. Terrica Houston was a newly hired executive still assembling her team; interviews were ongoing, but retention concerns persisted.

Dr. Martin reminded everyone that we had sent a letter to the governor expressing a lack of confidence in the Department of Public Safety Planning. Dr. Anderson from DHS approached the Governor and requested that Title II be moved under DHS, but DPS opposed the move.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

GRANTS: Dr. Martin reminded everyone that, at the retreat, we agreed to work together to review and grade grant submissions. Dr. Martin asked Mr. Craft at DPS to report back that we are concerned about releasing a new RFP until someone is in place to administer these grants in a timely manner. Gloria Salters asked whether the current grant recipients are submitting progress reports for our review. Dr. Robertson stated that the state is required to submit quarterly progress reports on the grants to the feds.

PR/ED: See discussion on Data Access.



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PUBLIC RELATIONS: Efforts to modernize SAG's annual reporting and improve public engagement are underway, aiming for clearer communication of juvenile justice impacts and grant activities. Lakeisha Bryant-Hall stated that the committee is working diligently to produce the 2022-2024 report. They are planning to model future reports after the Council of Juvenile Justice (CJJ) format, focusing on leadership messages, grant activities, field impact, and legislative priorities.

Katrina Phillips reported that the SAG website is being updated for user-friendliness, with all meeting minutes current and conference information nearly complete. A dedicated section for grant recipients will feature agency highlights and brief descriptions of their funded projects to increase transparency and community awareness.

SAG members and grant recipients will be contacted to provide blurbs and photos for the website and social media channels. The committee emphasized the need for more active Facebook engagement to share juvenile justice news and highlight program successes.

LEGISLATIVE: Toni Kersh reported that the main legislative push is for a Uniform Youth Court system, which had limited traction last year but remains a priority.

The Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) has proposed legislation to mandate a statewide diversion program with AOC oversight. MDHS opposes it because its centralized approach conflicts with community-based models.

MDHS plans technical amendments to rename diversion programs from "AOP" to "Juvenile Justice Diversion Programs" to clarify funding and oversight responsibilities under MDHS.

Angela Robertson shared that the initiative she has been working on is deploying nearly \$500,000 across at least seven community-based diversion programs, funded through the Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative. These programs require court referrals and participation in evaluations conducted by Dr. Gardner to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

Dr. Robertson expressed concern that AOC's legislative efforts may hijack diversion efforts, prompting plans to attend upcoming legislative hearings in Jackson to advocate for community-based models. Coordination with DHS and other stakeholders remains critical to prevent duplication and ensure proper funding flow.

Dr. Martin thanked the group for their dedication amid staffing and administrative challenges, noting that Mississippi's leadership in juvenile justice conferences and its ongoing influence remain nationally recognized.



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Adjourned: 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Katrina Phillips

Katrina Phillips
MSJJAC Secretary

FOLLOW-UP TASKS:

- Travel for the 2nd quarter meeting needs to be sent to Tawni Basden @ DPS in the next 2 weeks.
- Gloria and Alfred to meet regarding the RFP
- Ta'shia to get a draft of the Conflict of Interest statement to Alfred. Any other member is requested to send any copies that they might have.
- Katrina and Lakeshia to finalize the 22 – 24 report, and will be reaching out for information

Important Dates for 2026:

- 2nd Quarter – April 10, 2026
- 3rd Quarter – August 5, 2026 before the Symposium
- Symposium Dates – August 5 – 7, 2026
- 4th Quarter – October 9, 2026
- Retreat – Tentative October 7 – 9, 2026