

# **Sustaining Juvenile Justice System Reform**

## Regional Consensus Building Meetings

### **Final Report**

Spring 2015



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Louisiana has made great strides in juvenile justice reform over the past decade with many stakeholders working towards a modern system that is developmentally appropriate, responsive to youth and community needs, and utilizes best practices from across the nation. Despite the great progress over the past decade, there was no clear consensus of what reform areas needed more attention or what the next steps for reform efforts were. To answer that question, the **Institute for Public Health and Justice** (IPHJ) hosted four regional meetings in the spring of 2015 to review and discuss potential areas of reform and to identify the consensus areas of reform.

The regional meetings were attended by a variety of juvenile justice stakeholders, including prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement members, detention center administrators, administrators of local and state probation and court services, and judiciary members. Meetings were held in Lafayette with 29 stakeholders, Baton Rouge with 20 stakeholders, New Orleans with 29 stakeholders, and Ruston with 17 stakeholders.

At each meeting, IPHJ provided a brief update on juvenile justice reform efforts to date, facilitated a discussion of stakeholder regional needs, and stakeholders voted on what the priority areas of reform should be in their opinion. More information about the meeting details are provided in Appendix A of this report. Stakeholders identified the top five priority areas of reform as the following:

1. School to Prison Pipeline/Exclusionary Discipline
2. FINS Reform
3. Diversion and Civil Citations
4. Detention
5. Age and Development Consideration for Judicial Responsibilities

## About the Institute for Public Health and Justice

The **Institute for Public Health and Justice** at LSU Health Sciences Center is a policy, research, training, and technical assistance enterprise positioned at the intersection of health policy/practice and the justice system. Many behavioral and other health conditions have social determinants. The Institute seeks to bridge the divide between what we know about prevention and treatment of behavioral health conditions and the negative impacts on communities, the perpetrators themselves their victims, and the overall justice system.

Reflecting its broad scope and collaborative approach, the Institute is located and administered through the LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans, School of Public Health.

Over the past ten years, through the support of the Models for Change efforts and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative much work has been started related to the first four consensus areas—School to Prison Pipeline/Exclusionary Discipline, FINS Reform, Diversion, and Detention. Although a great deal of work has been accomplished, it is far from complete. Pilot efforts related to policy and practice reforms in these areas have proven successful but support for continued implementation, further development, and replication throughout Louisiana is needed to expand these efforts to a larger number of communities.

The fifth consensus area of reform – Age and Development Consideration for Judicial Responsibilities – was a new area of consensus for juvenile justice stakeholders in Louisiana. There has been a movement by states to designate the age of adult criminal responsibility as 18-year-olds as part of the national trend towards a more developmentally appropriate and responsive criminal justice system. Louisiana, on the other hand, is one of nine states in the United States that automatically transfers a 17-year-olds to be tried as an adult.

House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 73 of the 2015 Louisiana Legislative Session by Representative Walt Leger requested the Institute “... study the current state of the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems to better understand the potential impact of raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include 17-year-olds.” The Institute will submit its report to the Louisiana Legislature in early 2016.

### **Recommended Next Steps for Louisiana’s Juvenile Justice System**

Two key themes emerged from the four regional consensus meetings – reform efforts are still needed to create a modern juvenile justice system in Louisiana and stakeholders continue to be engaged and supportive of reform efforts. The Institute recommends building on this support to create a **statewide five-year strategic plan** for the juvenile justice system that focuses stakeholder energy and efforts on a united, clear plan.

The Institute also recommends **juvenile justice system training**, particularly for newly elected and appointment stakeholder groups. As reform efforts continue to develop a more developmentally appropriate juvenile justice system, it is important to provide ongoing updates to stakeholders on national best practices and efforts in Louisiana.

A unique challenge in understanding Louisiana’s juvenile justice system is the lack of shared information with many juvenile justice focused organizations acting as silos of valuable data. The Institute recommends a **statewide data sharing effort**. Such an effort would allow stakeholders quality data when making decisions and implementing best practices.

## Appendix A: Regional Consensus Building Meetings Information

This section contains information about each of the four regional consensus building meetings hosted by IPHJ in the spring 2015.

### Meeting Details

Regional Meeting	Meeting Date & Location	Meeting Attendance
Southwest and Central Region	February 2, 2015 Lafayette's Sheriff's Training Facility 1825-2 West Willow Street Scott, LA 70583	29
Capital Region	February 3, 2015 SSA Consultants 9331 Bluebonnet Boulevard Baton Rouge, LA 70810	20
Southeastern Region	February 4, 2015 New Orleans Youth Study Center 1100 Milton Street New Orleans, LA 70122	29
Northern Region	February 20, 2015 Louisiana Tech University University Hall, Room 111 Ruston, LA 71272	17

Meeting attendees included representatives from a variety of juvenile justice organizations including prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement members, detention center administrators, administrators of local and state probation and court services, and judiciary members.

Meeting attendees participated in a voting exercise to determine what they thought the top three consensus areas of reform and what the top five priority reform areas were for Louisiana.

### Top Three Consensus Areas of Reform

	Southwest and Central Region	Capital Region	Southeastern Region	Northern Region
1.	FINS Reform	FINS Reform	School to Prison Pipeline	School to Prison Pipeline
2.	School to Prison Pipeline	School to Prison Pipeline	FINS Reform	Statewide Data Reporting
3.	Age and Development Consideration for Judicial Responsibilities	Diversion/Civil Citation	Diversion/Civil Citation Training Requirements [TIE]	Non-Secure Facilities

### Top Five Priority Areas of Reform

	Southwest and Central Region	Capital Region	Southeastern Region	Northern Region
1.	School to Prison Pipeline	FINS Reform	School to Prison Pipeline	FINS Reform
2.	FINS Reform	School to Prison Pipeline	FINS Reform	School to Prison Pipeline
3.	Diversion/Civil Citation	Probation	Diversion/Civil Citation	Probation
4.	Probation	Detention	Detention	Secure Facilities
5.	Age and Development Consideration for Judicial Responsibilities	Diversion/Civil Citation	Probation	Age and Development Consideration for Judicial Responsibilities