

February 28, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

As requested, I have completed the 12th Equal Protection Monitor Report concerning the progress of the Juvenile Court to comply with the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), although terminated. The Juvenile Court was required to adopt and execute a specific process for addressing disproportionate minority contact (DMC) that included achieving greater equity for all youth.

As is discussed in the Report, the Juvenile Court has made progress. But, there is still a need for more work in this area. There is a continued need to address the overrepresentation of minority youth in terms of referrals and in secure detention as well as in the receiving of a petition by the Juvenile Court. Moving forward it suggested that the Juvenile Court: (1) continue to monitor efforts and initiatives, (2) as part of the process conduct evaluations to see if initiatives are impacting DMC and when possible, conduct multivariate analyses as part of the evaluation, and (3) revise procedures and implement new strategies as needed.

While it important to continue to address referrals and the use of secure detention, the most glaring immediate need is to examine in detail decision-making at the non-judicial stage involving petition. It is at this stage that both overrepresentation and racial inequities exist and the change that occurred to address these occurrences was recent (August of 2018). An assessment of the factors that determine decision-making at this stage needs to occur that involves the use of multivariate analyses and whether the changes implemented by the Juvenile Court are impacting DMC as desired.

The Juvenile Court has contracted with Melissa Sickmund as a statistician to address DMC. I have been informed that she will be conducting the kind of analysis described above. This is good. But and as was the practice with me, an independent researcher who studies the influence of race/ethnicity on juvenile court outcomes should also be hired to conduct assessments. Such a practice ensures independence and replication; producing greater faith in what has been conducted and the accuracy of the analyses and results.

Recommended individuals who can do this work are:

Dr. Nancy Rodriguez, School Social Ecology, University of Irvine - rodri6@uci.edu

Dr. Tina Freiburger, Criminal Justice, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee - freiburg@uwm.edu

Dr. Megan Kurlychek, Criminal Justice, State University of New York Albany

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Dr. Kareem Jordan, School of Public Affairs, American University- jordan@american.edu

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Each of the above individuals have and continue to conduct research and publish on the factors, including race/ethnicity, that impact juvenile court decision-making. Each is highly qualified to conduct assessment studies.

If I can address any questions or help the community of Shelby and the Juvenile Court moving forward, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Leiber".

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