



# Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board

May 25, 2021 Meeting Summary

The Ohio Collaborative Community Police Advisory Board (Collaborative) is a multidisciplinary group consisting of a diverse group of Ohioans including law enforcement, community members, elected officials, academia and the faith based community. The Collaborative was created by executive order 2015-04k on April 29, 2015, after the Governor's Task Force on Community Police Relations completed its work and produced a report with recommendations on how to improve the important relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The Collaborative is chaired by Assistant Director Karen Huey, Department of Public Safety. Members appointed by the Governor DeWine, including ex officio members, are identified below:

- Commissioner Lori Barreras— Chair of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission
- The Honorable Michael Bell – Former Mayor of Toledo
- Representative Juanita Brent – Ohio Representative
- Dr. Ronnie Dunn—Cleveland State University, Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Interim Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- Dr. Robin S. Engel—University of Cincinnati, Professor of Criminal Justice and Director of IACP/UC Center of Police Research and Policy
- Officer Anthony L. Johnson—Columbus Police Department and member, Fraternal Order of Police
- BCI Superintendent Joe Morbitzer— Ohio Attorney General's Office
- Reverend Walter S. Moss— Pastor and CIRV Project Director, Stark County Prosecutor's Office
- The Honorable Ronald J. O'Brien—Former Franklin County Prosecutor
- Chief Justin Páez—Dublin Police Department and member of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
- Sheriff Rob Streck – Montgomery County Sheriff's Office and member of the Buckeye State Sheriff's Association

Ex officio members:

- Representative Phil Plummer – Ohio Representative
- The Honorable Tom Roberts—former Ohio Senator and President, Ohio Conference of Units of NAACP
- The late Honorable Louis Stokes— former member of Congress
- The late Honorable George V. Voinovich—former U.S. Senator, Governor of Ohio, and Mayor of Cleveland
- Senator Sandra Williams – Ohio Senator

The purpose of the Collaborative is to advise and work with the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) at the Ohio Department of Public Safety to implement the Task Force's recommendations, as identified in the Executive Order.

## **May 25, 2021 Virtual Meeting of the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board**

Due to Coronavirus, the Ohio Collaborative meeting May 25, 2021 was again held virtually using Microsoft TEAMS Live. The following members were present at the meeting:

- Assistant Director Karen Huey, Chair
- Executive Director Karhlton Moore
- Commissioner Lori Barreras,
- The Honorable Michael Bell
- Dr. Ronnie Dunn
- Dr. Robin Engel
- Officer Anthony Johnson
- BCI Superintendent Joe Morbitzer
- Chief Justin Páez,
- The Honorable Tom Roberts
- Sheriff Streck

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 A.M.

Assistant Director Huey welcomed board members and asked Carol Ellensohn to conduct roll call.

Carol Ellensohn conducted roll call.

Assistant Director Huey again welcomed everyone and gave them an update on the Department of Public Safety's return to office. She noted that DPS is transitioning into a hybrid model at least until the fall. It is uncertain when we will start having in-person meetings, but there is a chance our September Collaborative meeting will be in person.

Assistant Director Huey provided an overview of the agenda, including a discussion about the wellness standard. She praised the board for providing feedback and acknowledged OCJS staff for their research identifying elements of the standard to include for consideration. Assistant Director Huey pointed out other agenda items, including a presentation on law enforcement interaction with juveniles (and whether we want a standard on this topic), an update on the Certification program, and an update on the Law Enforcement Recruitment Office (LERO).

Assistant Director Huey reminded everyone that today is the one year anniversary of George Floyd's death. Today gives us an opportunity to look over the past year and reflect.

### Wellness Standard

Executive Director Moore led the discussion about the wellness standard. He noted that OCJS staff incorporated feedback from several board members and others, and thanked everyone for their comments, which was helpful to creating a structure for developing the standard. Executive Director Moore reminded the Board of the presentations they heard from Columbus Police Department and their wellness efforts, from Chief Balling of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, and from Sgt. Scalf, who provided powerful testimony on the impact of trauma and on the importance of this standard for

officers. Executive Director Moore then thanked the Certification section and the Policy and Research section for developing the framework for the standard.

Executive Director Moore then noted an additional possible change to consider in the standard. Superintendent Morbitzer pointed out that in the Purpose area of the standard, we reference “law enforcement agencies”, but in the standard itself, we broaden this to agency personnel. Supt. Morbitzer felt that this broader language should be used in the Purpose area as well. Others agreed, including Chief Páez and Sheriff Streck, who voiced their approval.

Executive Director Moore noted that the standard has a pretty ‘healthy’ Commentary section, and stated that there are many considerations that agencies should be mindful of when developing a policy. Much of the information in the Commentary came from feedback OCJS received from board members, other interested parties, and literature reviews of existing research on wellness.

Executive Director Moore then asked the group if there are any other areas of the standard which we need to expand upon.

- Dr. Engel provided an update on Sgt. Scalf’s recovery—he is doing great, and felt that being able to talk to this group helped him out tremendously.
- Dr. Engel then stated that she has had a few agencies reach out to her for model wellness policies that can serve as an example to those agencies considering developing such a policy. Do we have any that we can highlight? If we do we can make them available? Executive Director Moore responded that we can share some of the policies that we used in developing the standard. We can also develop a policy that agencies can use, but it will take some time.
- Officer Johnson pointed out that the last sentence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the Commentary is outside of the scope of this standard. He also noted that the sentence suggests that law enforcement agencies are qualified to assess the mental health status of their officers, which is not the case. It was suggested that this sentence be removed in its entirety, and others agreed.
- Chief Páez thanked everyone for developing this standard and for including the focus on the family as well as co-workers.
- Executive Director Moore asked the Board to consider updating the title of the standard to “Agency Wellness” rather than “Officer Wellness”, in line with the approved changes the Board made to broaden the standard to all agency personnel. There were no objections to this change.

Ed Burkhammer provided an update from the Certification section. He noted that since we last met, the Certification Report was released and put on the website. In 2021, 529 agencies were certified in the first two standards, which meets the Executive Order. This covers 83% of officers and 83% of the communities they serve. In addition, Ohio responded very quickly to the presidential Executive Order from 2020, which barred chokeholds except in those cases in which deadly use of force is justified. Thus far, 629 agencies were certified. Those 629 agencies cover 28,000 Ohio law enforcement officers and 9.4 million citizens.

Mr. Burkhammer then discussed that many agencies were waiting for the wellness standard to be passed by this Board, so they can submit both the mass protests/demonstrations standard and the wellness standard as a group. He also thanked members for passing the agency wellness standard. Mr. Burkhammer also noted that he spoke with OACP and BSSA representatives and consulted with CALEA

on both standards and they helped to get them out to the agencies. He has received a very positive response.

Finally, Mr. Burkhammer noted that we are almost one year out from the anniversary of everything that took place in the summer of 2020. In June 2020, Governor DeWine publicly spoke about what the Certification section is trying to accomplish. In that time, they have had 64 new law enforcement agencies get into the collaborative and get certified on the first two standards. They also had a total of 404 new certifications in the last 12 months.

Executive Director Moore then told Board members that one of the outgoing wishes of a chief who is retiring May 31 is that his department becomes certified before he retires. It is impressive that achieving certification is the last act of his very long career.

Assistant Director Huey then introduced Sarah Shendy and the Law Enforcement Recruitment Office. Assistant Director Huey noted that there is a great deal of interest in the topic of officer recruitment and attracting good candidates. This was a question she and Director Stickrath got from the legislature during budget testimony.

Officer Shendy provided her work background as an officer with the Copley Police Department and an OPOTA trainer. She complimented her team of Dr. Patrick Oliver and researcher Anjolie Harland in moving the LERO forward. She then discussed the goals of the LERO, which are to help police departments and academies to learn what they can do to attract qualified candidates overall, and with an emphasis on women and minorities. She discussed the efforts her team has undertaken to raise awareness of the profession, including working with Warhol and Wall Street (a public relations firm), meeting with religious groups, newspapers and magazines, high schools and colleges, and taking part in podcasts. They are in the 'engagement' phase. Officer Shendy disputed the comment that it is a challenging time to be a law enforcement officer, and noted that leaders didn't arise during easy times—this is a great time to rise above the narrative and challenges to show who we (law enforcement) are and what we are made of.

Officer Shendy highlighted some of the key features of the LERO website. She also discussed some webinars they hope to have on various law enforcement programs, such as the Explorers Program, and that they are looking for speakers to discuss these programs. Finally, she discussed a College to Law Enforcement program (later described by Dr. Oliver).

OCJS researcher Anjolie Harland then described the Summer Challenge program to encourage agencies to become engaged with their communities using social media.

Commissioner Barreras asked about the screening process for recruitment and how this may inadvertently screen out some women and minorities who are otherwise qualified for a law enforcement officer position. How do we deal with this? Officer Shendy discussed the possibility of 'blind' screening to eliminate this issue. She also brought up the importance of talking with HR and city managers so that they understand the important role they play in the process. Dr. Engel then pointed out that where we are losing applicants is not at the screening phase but later in the process. It is important for agencies to collect data on every step of the process to identify where they are losing women and minority candidates.

Dr. Patrick Oliver then discussed the College to Law Enforcement academic program, which is a leadership program for criminal justice and related majors to develop future law enforcement officers. The program is intended to deal with the top two recruiting issues in law enforcement: 1) it is difficult to get qualified candidates; 2) it is difficult to get minorities and women. The program will be piloted in Cedarville University and Central State University. Students apply during their junior year (the first year is an exception in which seniors may apply). The program requires students to have a 3.0 GPA. Before they are accepted into the program, they receive a background and polygraph, mental health assessment, physical fitness assessment, and medical exam. The LERO will manage and pay for all assessments. Throughout the program, accepted students need to continue their 3.0 GPA, and they receive ongoing fitness training, a mentor, an internship, ride-alongs, and a series of workshops to prepare them for law enforcement service. Involved agencies need to create an alternative path into their agency so that when students graduate they can be hired by an agency. There will be a bidding process to determine where candidates go. Because this is a pilot program, it will be evaluated to determine how/if it works, and where modifications are needed. They need law enforcement agencies to consider being a part of this program.

- Both Dr. Engel and Dr. Dunn expressed interest in this program.
- Assistant Director Huey exclaimed her excitement about this initiative. An update will be provided at the next meeting. Promotional materials will be sent to Board members to pass along to their community.
- Executive Director Moore then noted that we are also trying to track those things that prohibit people from getting through the recruitment process. If anyone on the call has insight into this, please share with Officer Shendy.
- Officer Johnson informed Officer Shendy that he has a social media following and a podcast. He expressed his willingness to organize community events. Officer Shendy remarked that they would make a great team and the message would be very impactful.
- Chief Páez remarked that as we talk about the future of recruitment, we [executives] know what we are looking for in recruits, but what are the expectations that communities have about what services law enforcement agencies should provide? Effective and empathetic communication is very important. It is also helpful to have officers who can communicate in other languages so that agencies can connect with these communities. Officer Shendy acknowledged this point and noted that a lot of minorities shy away from the profession because of their differences, but that these differences are what makes people successful in the profession.

Assistant Director Huey thanked Officer Shendy and Dr. Oliver for their presentation.

For the last presentation, Assistant Director Huey introduced Dr. Gabriella Celeste, who is Policy Director of the Schubert Center for Child Studies and Co-Director of the Childhood Studies program at Case Western Reserve University, where she also is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology.

Dr. Celeste introduced her team of Charmin Leon and Lisa Thureau. Ms. Leon is an Implementation Specialist for the COMPSTAT for Justice Initiative. She is also a former officer for the Cleveland Police Department. Ms. Thureau founded Strategies for Youth, Inc., a nonprofit advocacy and training organization dedicated to improving police/youth interactions and reducing disproportionate minority contact.

Dr. Celeste described the Schubert Center as a center dedicated to the well-being of youth, and its goal is to find ways to ensure better outcomes for youth. Dr. Celeste's presentation focused on creating a developmentally-informed approach to policing. There is a key gap between intellectual ability and social maturity. The critical skill of self-regulation is not fully in place until the early 20s. The main point of the presentation was that youth matters, and how police interact with youth matters. She then discussed the importance of developing a standard for police-youth interactions that focuses on clarity of expectations, consistency, accountability, and legitimacy, and recommended the following: 1) adoption of a statewide standard for law enforcement interactions with youth; 2) promotion of a comprehensive "Interactions with Youth" model policy as guidance for Ohio law enforcement agencies; 3) Support of the use of a comprehensive curriculum to ensure age-appropriate training with OPOTA. Dr. Celeste noted that the Cleveland Police Department has developed a comprehensive model policy that is groundbreaking and reflects much of the research, aligns with best practices, assures legal protections, is bias-free and trauma-informed, and relies on diversion. It is a sea change in its approach to policy. In addition, IACP provided guidance on best practices on how to interact with youth.

Ms. Leon noted that there has to be a standard that defines our boundaries, and that officers who received training on officer-youth interactions expressed positive feedback and showed improved understanding of how youth respond to police encounters.

Ms. Thureau thanked the Board for allowing them to present to the committee.

Assistant Director Huey thanked the team for their presentation and their passion.

Dr. Dunn and Dr. Engel both thanked the team for their presentation and the importance of developing such a standard. Dr. Engel then asked why the standard was not pursued earlier. Executive Director Moore responded that there was disagreement on whether we should develop a model policy or a standard. Then there was an election and turnover in representation on the Board, so they never got to a point where a standard was further explored.

Chief Páez agreed with Drs. Dunn and Engel of the importance of this presentation. Officers have a fundamental responsibility to serve and protect vulnerable populations, including youth. We need to set up officers for success. A standard helps to deliver on the mission and to do so in a mindful way.

Assistant Director Huey asked if many departments already have a policy on interactions with youth, and Chief Páez responded that while it is common to have pieces in various policies, there are not many that have a focused policy on youth. A cohesive policy helps provide the perspective of what is expected for the agency, officer, and community. Assistant Director Huey also added that a policy would raise the importance of the issue and give an opportunity to educate and train.

Assistant Director Huey again thanked the presenters and suggested we should move forward with a standard and accompanying policy, with the goal of having something for the Board to consider by the next meeting. She added it might be helpful to review the Cleveland Police Department policy and develop a small work group to focus on this effort.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 P.M.