

**Office of Justice Programs
Science Advisory Board Meeting
July 17, 2014 Meeting Summary**

Welcome and Administrative Issues

The meeting of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Science Advisory Board (SAB) was called to order by Al Blumstein, Chair, at 830 am in the Main Conference Room of the OJP building at 810 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC.

The Chair welcomed participants and noted that all subcommittee chairs were participating. Phelan Wyrick, Designated Federal Officer (DFO), reminded participants that the SAB is a federal advisory committee, that this is a public meeting, and that the day's meeting was announced in the Federal Register.

Science and Practice at OJP

OJP Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Karol Mason spoke about OJP's continuing commitment to science and noted this is part of the Attorney General's "smart on crime" agenda. Mason noted that Greg Ridgeway, Acting Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), had accepted a faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania and thanked him for his service to NIJ and OJP. Mason described the process underway to find a replacement for the Deputy Director of NIJ and noted that the Administration is also working on nominating a Director for NIJ. Since these activities would not be complete prior to Ridgeway's departure, Mason announced that Bill Sabol (currently Acting Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics – BJS) would serve as Acting Director of both NIJ and BJS in the interim period.

Mason went on to describe a series of activities within OJP that serve as diverse examples of OJP's ongoing commitment to improving the quality of science and the integration of science into OJP programs and practices. These included the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA's) efforts to improve the quality of crime analysis across the nation, NIJ's recently announced challenge grant to encourage low cost randomized controlled trials, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) addition of a new Senior Social Science Analyst, BJS's ongoing efforts to encourage and support the collection of incident based data collection through the National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X) project, and the Office for Victims of Crime's (OVC's) recognition of notable researchers on victimization and crime victim services.

[The sequence of the agenda was modified at this point because the scheduled presenter for the 9:00 session was delayed.]

Science Advisory Board Membership and Terms

DFO Phelan Wyrick provided information about OJP's intentions for the SAB going forward. Wyrick noted that the SAB was established by the Attorney General in November 2010 and that members were appointed to four-year terms that expire in 2014. In April 2014, OJP posted a public notice to the Federal Register indicating an interest in nominations to the SAB. Wyrick indicated that all current SAB members would receive a letter thanking them for their service over the first four years and inviting them to serve on the SAB again. He noted that interest in continuing on the SAB was not a guarantee of selection to continue on the SAG. Also that invitations may be for a two-year term or a four-year term. This approach is being applied on a one time basis to create staggered membership terms going forward. SAB members and subcommittee members were invited to nominate themselves and others. At this time, Al Blumstein announced that he would not continue to serve as Chair of the SAB beyond his current term and that he has recommended that his successor come from the current Subcommittee Chairs. AAG Karol Mason, all of the SAB members, and those in attendance expressed their gratitude to the Chair for his leadership and service.

OJJDP's Response to the National Academies' Report Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach

OJJDP Administrator Robert Listenbee discussed the National Research Council's (NRC's) report commissioned by OJJDP in 2010, including the implication of neuroscience research for juvenile justice reform and the importance of scientifically based reform efforts. Listenbee noted that the report included four recommendations that OJJDP has adopted as a basis for reform. Listenbee invited SAB member Edward Mulvey to speak more about the report as he served on the NRC panel. Mulvey noted the importance of accountability, fairness, and using evidence-based approaches to prevent reoffending. Mulvey also discussed recommendations related to increasing the capacity of OJJDP to take a leadership role in research and improving the quality of juvenile justice data.

In the ensuing discussion with SAB members, Alan Leshner noted the importance of publicizing the NRC report to serve as a stimulus for reform in the field. Al Blumstein suggested partnering with NIH to build support for research related to the developing neuroscience. Andrea Cabral noted that the Supreme Court has begun to recognize the evolving neuroscience and emphasized the importance of translating this science into policy. Rick Rosenfeld inquired as to whether decrease in adolescent offending and arrests since 1990's could be attributed to juvenile justice system reforms. Others offered thoughts, but Mulvey pointed out that the data are not available to answer the question because data sets across states are not standardized, which points to the importance of OJJDP helping states developing infrastructure to answer such questions. Listenbee concluded the session noting that OJJDP is coordinating with NIJ and BJS to improve its capacity.

National Center on Community Trust and Justice

[This session was rescheduled from the 9:00 am agenda spot and occurred at this point in the sequence.]

Ed Chung, Policy Advisor in the Office of the Assistant Attorney General (OAAG), presented information about the National Center on Building Community Trust and Justice (the Center). He noted that the Center was premised on concepts of procedural justice that emphasize the importance of fair treatment by law enforcement as a foundation for healthy and cooperative relationships with the communities that they serve. The Center is the subject of a 2014 OJP solicitation and will be funded for 3 years. Five goals of the Center will be to put evidence-based strategies into practice; establish a single source of information for the field; develop evidence translation materials; support and conduct research; and promote public discourse about procedural justice, implicit bias, and racial reconciliation. Several SAB members indicated general support for the project and Leshner indicated that he preferred the terms “procedural fairness” to “procedural justice” because he thought it was more straightforward and accessible to laypeople.

OJJDP Subcommittee Report

SAB member and OJJDP Subcommittee Chair, Mark Lipsey discussed the continuing interest of the subcommittee in the recently established innovation and research unit at OJJDP. The Subcommittee was pleased with ongoing progress and noted two areas for further discussion: training and technical assistance and the peer review process for research applications.

Federal Evidence-Based Clearinghouses

Thom Feucht, Executive Senior Science Advisor for NIJ, discussed status of the CrimeSolutions.gov website and noted that it holds profiles of 308 programs and 22 practices (based on results from meta-analysis research). Of the programs, 62% are rated as promising and 25% are rated as effective. OJP has reassembled the CrimeSolutions.gov working group and is promoting the website to U.S. Attorneys. CrimeSolutions.gov utilizes a web service that allows site content to be shared with other websites. In coordination with other federal agencies, NIJ is exploring options for providing open access to underlying data within CrimeSolutions.gov.

BJA Subcommittee Report

SAB member and BJA Subcommittee Chair, Ed Mulvey reported that the subcommittee has focused on program evaluations and methods to foster improved researcher practitioner partnerships. Topics included clarifying models of change, data collection and measurement, and organizational arrangements at the local level. Elizabeth “Betsi” Griffith from BJA joined the discussion and emphasized BJA’s role in helping to translate research for grantees and practitioners to use. She described a BJA-funded

effort called the Ohio Consortia Project that helps connect justice researchers and practitioners in the state of Ohio. SAB member Rick Rosenfeld recommended using more experienced researchers in practitioner partnerships.

OJP Diagnostic Center

Katherine Darke-Schmitt and Amy Staubs, OAAG Policy Advisors, delivered a presentation describing how the Diagnostic Center works to help communities address public safety issues by building capacity to use data. The Diagnostic Center helps communities define challenges, identify data that are available to them, analyze problems, and identify evidence-based and promising practices. Staubs described examples of engagements with the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office and the Minneapolis Police Department. SAB member David Weisburd inquired about the long-term vision for the Diagnostic Center and how requests for services will be handled when demand surpasses supply. Darke-Schmitt responded that the Diagnostic Center will likely continue to operate with very limited federal staffing and that prioritizing requests has not been an issue to date, but that a variety of factors (e.g., justice topic, geographic location) would be considered if prioritization was required.

BJS Subcommittee Report

SAB member and BJS Subcommittee Chair, Rick Rosenfeld reported that the BJS subcommittee continues to focus on the National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X) project that involves developing nationally representative crime statistics through expansion of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). This is based on a partnership between BJS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). BJS Acting Director, Bill Sabol also reported that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has issued a Statistical Policy Directive affecting federal statistical agencies and recognized statistical units. He noted that the Directive was posted in the Federal Register for comment. Sabol indicated that he viewed the Directive favorably and said it was important for the credibility of federal statistical agencies. SAB members briefly discussed options for commenting on the Directive.

Forensic Science Research

NIJ Acting Director Greg Ridgeway discussed the development of forensic science research at NIJ over the last five years since the 2009 release of the National Academy of Sciences Report on Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States. He described how NIJ opened a new Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences in 2009 has invested over \$100 million in forensic science research in that time. He provided examples of basic and applied research findings that have been generated from this work including improved technologies for processing DNA samples and scientific data on error rates by ballistics examiners and blood spatter analysts. Ridgeway also described recent Congressional action related to forensic science reform and mentioned bills that have been proposed by Senator Leahy and Senator Rockefeller. He noted that both bills are largely silent on the scientific role of NIJ and remarked on the importance of working to

educate Congressional staffers about NIJ's work. SAB members and OJP/NIJ participants discussed methods for increasing the visibility and awareness of NIJ's forensic science research. Ideas included talking more with the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee within the Senate; developing fact sheets, writing letters, and using Wikipedia.

NIJ Subcommittee Report

SAB member and NIJ Subcommittee Chair David Weisburd shared additional thoughts on the previous day's subcommittee review of NIJ's activities out of the Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences. Building on the earlier discussion of juvenile justice, he noted that NIJ scientists could be a resource or partners in the neuroscience area. In general, he noted major strides at NIJ over the past five years. Chair Al Blumstein and AAG Karol Mason took this opportunity to express their thanks, appreciation, and gratitude to NIJ Acting Director Greg Ridgeway for his service.

OJP Science Advisory Board Activities Going Forward

DFO Phelan Wyrick led a discussion on ideas to continue improving the SAB. He described input received from SAB members in the spring of 2014 in response to an OJP inquiry for feedback. SAB feedback included suggestions to develop a more focused agenda in the medium and long term and provide more direct requests to the SAB. The group discussed a more explicit focus on particular cross-cutting areas and explored program evaluation as a possible topic. This would involve a greater commitment of resources by OJP to delve into an issue. David Weisburd emphasized that this group should be providing advice on policies. Alan Leshner suggested asking the SAB questions such as, what are the activities that should have required evaluations and what should be evaluated at a higher level of aggregation? Rick Rosenfeld emphasized that better SAB advice and recommendations will come when questions are more refined. Ed Mulvey agreed and suggested that the SAB should be in a reactive role relative to requests that OJP puts to them. Tony Fabelo highlighted technical assistance as a critical area for further development. Karol Mason and Phelan Wyrick noted that there are existing mechanisms within OJP that could be used to generate more specific requests to the SAB (e.g., the Research Coordinating Council).

Closing Remarks

Science Advisory Board members, presenters, and audience members were thanked for their attendance.