BURKE COUNTY JCPC
October 8, 2025
OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING
Collett Street Recreation Center, Morganton, NC

Outreach Members Present: Chair, Jennifer Forney, Andrew Byerly, Camy Ervin, Chris Norman and Kaylee Wohlenhaus.
JCC Liaison: Derek Hare
JCC Staff Present: Derek Church and David Hughey.
JCPC/DJJ Staff Present: A.J. Coutu and Megan Webster.

Program Representatives: Cathy Starnes - Conflict Resolution Center;
Renee Lewis – Repay Inc.; and Nicole Jenkins – Kids at Work.

1.0 Jennifer Forney, Outreach Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 8:16 A.M.
2.0 Chris Norman made the motion to approve the agenda as presented, which was seconded by Kaylee Wohlenhaus and passed unanimously.

3.0 Ms. Forney reminded the group to review the Continuum of Services for additions, deletions or any changes. Cathy Starnes mentioned to the group that the North Carolina DHHS has a mentoring application on line called “Somethings”. This was discussed briefly.

Ms. Forney reminded the group that the objective for the meeting was to review the data from the past year and create a list of priorities to present to the Council as guidance for the Finance Committee. The priorities from the previous year were sent to the group previously and passed out in hard copy to the attendees. She turned the meeting over to Megan Webster.

Ms. Webster prepared the complete YASI data which was sent to the group previously and was available in hard copy at the meeting. Ms. Webster mentioned that the local and statewide information being presented was compiled from the work of juvenile court staff locally and across the state, into the current format. She summarized each section of the charts and observations for the group and reviewed which of the items the group felt needed to be targeted for inclusion for the Risk and Needs data to be presented to the Council in November. Ms. Webster produced data from previous years as needed as well as the actual number of youth the percentages represented when necessary. The discussions were dominated by the data presented which was sent to the entire Council. Short discussions and questions were fielded on items which the group felt, by necessity or circumstance were over or under reported. In addition, items which indicated substantial work on the part of programs and government staff to positively impact the court involved youth were highlighted.
The County census in 2020 was 87,570 with approximately 20% under the age of 18. 164 youth were assessed in Burke County. The state data used for comparison reflected assessment of 12,928 youth. 81% of the youth assessed during this period evidenced low to moderate Risk level, 91% were very low to high moderate Needs level and their Strengths were similar to the State’s percentages.

Following these discussions the list below reflects the areas selected by the Outreach Committee as significant:

BURKE COUNTY YASI Full Assessment Data Overview

Key Points – 164 Youth received full YASI Assessments

- Burke County youth have Moderate Risks
- Burke County youth have Moderate to High Moderate Needs
- Burke County youth have High Moderate to Very High Strengths

Legal History –164 youth assessed for this domain

Q1. Previous Delinquent Referrals

- 41% of the 164-youth assessed had a previous delinquent referral. This is lower than the state's rate of 46%. Last year's county rate was at 34%, showing an increase in the amount of youth having previous delinquent referrals. Three-year increasing trend.

Q2 Age at First Referral

- 15% of the 164-youth assessed were under the age of 12. This is higher than the state's rate of 9%. Last year the county's rate for youth being under the age of 12 for their first referral was 13%; showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

Q3. Number of Referrals with a Result (Referrals for any delinquent/criminal offenses that resulted in adjudication/conviction, diversion plan/contract, continued adjudication or completed disposition.

- 91% of the 164-youth assessed had a direct result come out of their referral. This is higher than the state's rate of 63%. Last year's state rate was 84%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

Q4. Felony Referrals to DJJ

- 21% of the 164-youth assessed had referrals for felony offenses. Last year's county rate was 19% and the year prior to that was 11%, showing a three-year increasing trend for felony offenses. This is still slightly lower than the state's rate of 35%.

Q6. Weapon Offenses – 1 or more

- 12% of the 164-youth assessed had previous weapon offenses. This is lower than the state's rate of 18%. Last year's county rate was 17%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.

Q7 Person Crimes

- 57% of the 164-youth assessed had referrals for offenses against another person. This is higher than the state's rate of 41%. Last year's county rate was 47%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.

Q10. Detention Admissions

- 15% of the 164-youth assessed had prior confinement in a juvenile detention facility. This is lower than the state's rate of 20%. Last year's county rate was at 12%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.

FAMILY DOMAIN – 159 youth Assessed for this Domain (5 did not apply)

Q1. Runaways

- 19% of the 159-youth assessed reported running away from home. This is lower than the state's rate of 21%. Last year's county rate was 22%; showing a decrease in the amount of youth counted as runaway.

Q4. Family Alcohol/Substance Abuse and Mental Health

- 23% of the 159-youth assessed have family members who are living in the household that have alcohol and/or substance abuse issues. This is higher than the state's rate of 12%. Last year's county rate was 22%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.
- 24% of the 159-youth assessed have family members who are living within the household that have mental health issues. This is higher than the state's rate of 12%. Last year's county rate was also 24%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.

Q4. Family Criminal History

- 34% of the 159-youth assessed have family members who are living in the household that have a prior criminal record. This is higher than the state's rate of 24%. Last year's county rate was 36%; showing a decrease from the previous year's rate to this year's.
- 10% of the 159-youth assessed have family members with a prior violent criminal record. This is higher than the state's rate of 6%. Last year's county rate was also 10%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.

Q6. Living Arrangements -

- 8% of the 159-youth assessed were living in a foster or group home. This is lower than the state's rate of 9%. Last year's county rate was also 8%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.

Q7. Parent/Custodian Supervision

- 70% of the 159-youth assessed; the parents know whom the youth is with, when they will return, where they're going and what they're doing. The parents offer good supervision. This is lower than the state's rate of 81%. Last year's county rate was 74%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. Three-year decreasing trend.
- 26% of the 159-youth assessed; the parents did not offer adequate supervision. This is higher than the state's rate of 16%. Last year's county rate was 20%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

SCHOOL DOMAIN – 159-youth Assessed – Domain did not apply to 5 youth

Q1. School Enrollment –

- 92% of the 159-youth Assessed are enrolled full-time. This is higher than the state rate of 83%. Last year's county rate was 93%, showing a small decrease from the previous year's rate. Three-year decreasing trend.

Q2. Attendance – past 3 months

- 53% of the 159-youth assessed were attending school on a regular basis. This is lower than the state's rate of 57%. Last year's county rate was 49%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. This is a three-year increasing trend.
- 22% of the 159-youth assessed had 5 or more Unexcused absences. This is higher than the state's rate of 19%. Last year's county rate was 29%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. This is a three-year decreasing trend.

Q3. School Conflict – past 3 months – School Justice Partnership (SJP) plays an important role.

- 31% of the 159-youth assessed had police reports filed on them by the school. This is higher than the state's rate of 22%. Last year's county rate was 40%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. This is a three-year decreasing trend. The School Justice Partnership has played a major role in school conflicts.

Q4. Academics – past 3 months

- 15% of the 159-youth assessed had a c- or lower grade. This is higher than the state's rate of 14%. Last year's county rate was 19%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.
- 19% of the 159-youth assessed were failing some classes. This is higher than the state's rate of 15%. Last year's county rate was at 25%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.
- 18% of the 159-youth assessed were failing most classes. This is higher than the state's rate of 14%. Last year's county rate was also 18%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.
- 37% of the 159-youth assessed were failing some to most classes. This is higher than the state's rate of 29%.

Q10. School Behavior – past 2 years

- 74% of the 159-youth assessed had one or more Out of School Suspension (OSS). This is higher than the state's rate of 61%. Last year's county rate was also 74%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.
- 67% of the 159-youth assessed had one of more In School Suspension (ISS). This is higher than the state's rate of 42%. Last year's county rate was 60%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.

Q12. School Activities – past 3 months

- 43% of the 159-youth assessed had no interest in school activities. This is higher than the state's rate of 28%. Last year's county rate was 42%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

COMMUNITY AND PEERS – 164 Youth Assessed

Q1. Peers/Associates

- 48% of the 164-youth assessed have negative and/or delinquent influence friends. This is higher than the state's rate of 46%. Last year's county rate was 49%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.

Q6. Negative Peer Associations

- 25% of the 164-youth assessed sometimes goes along with anti-social peers. This is lower than the state's rate of 32%. Last year's county rate was 26%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.
- 18% of the 164-youth assessed usually goes along with negative peer associations. This is lower than the state's rate of 13%. Last year's county rate was 20%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.
- 10% of the 164-youth assessed leads anti-social peers. This is higher than the state's rate of 2%. Last year's county rate was also 10%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.

ALCOHOL/DRUGS – *Possibility for under-reporting*

46% of the 164-youth assessed, admitted to using drugs and/or alcohol. This is higher than the state's rate of 40%. Last year's county rate was 38%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend. 75 juveniles of the 164-youth assessed admitted to drug and/or alcohol usage.

Q1. Age at 1st Use

- 12% of the 164-youth assessed who answered "YES" to Alcohol Drug Usage were under the age of 12 for their first-time usage of drugs and/or alcohol. This is higher than the state's rate of 11%. Last year's county rate was 6%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.
- 76% of the 164-youth assessed who answered "YES" to Alcohol Drug Usage were between the ages of 12-15 for their first-time usage of drugs and/or alcohol. This is lower than the state's rate of 78%. Last year's county rate was 80%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.

Q1. Alcohol/Drug Use

- 41% of the 164-youth assessed who answered "YES" to Alcohol Drug Usage admitted that the usage disrupts daily function. This is higher than the state's rate of 29%. Last year's county rate was 44%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. Three-year decreasing trend.

Q3. Previous Alcohol/Drug Treatment

- 65% of the 164-youth assessed who answered "YES" to Alcohol Drug Usage did not have previous alcohol/drug treatment. This is lower than the state's rate of 58%. Last year's county rate was 54%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

- 11% of the 164-youth assessed who answered "YES" to Alcohol Drug Usage did have previous alcohol/drug treatment. This is higher than the state's rate of 8%. Last year's county rate was 17%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.

MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN – 164 Youth Assessed *Potential to be under-reported*

- 51% of the 164-youth assessed had mental health problems. 51% of the 164-youth assessed were also diagnosed with mental health problems. Both are higher than the state's rate of 38%. Last year's county rate for both were 54%, showing a decrease in both areas.

Q1. Current/Past Treatment and/or Medications

- 26% of the 164-youth assessed are in current treatment. This higher than the state's rate of 21%. Last year's county rate was 29%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. Three-year decreasing trend.
- 29% of the 164-youth assessed had past treatment. This is higher than the state's rate of 18%. Last year's county rate was 27%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.
- 30% of the 164-youth assessed are currently prescribed medication. This is higher than the state's rate of 18%. Last year's county rate was 31%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.
- 27% of the 164-youth assessed had previously been prescribed medication. This is higher than the state's rate of 15%. Last year's county rate was 28%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate.

Q5. History of Abuse

- 15% of the 164-youth assessed had a history of abuse by a parent or sibling. This is higher than the state's rate of 8%. Last year's county rate was also 15%, showing no change from the previous year's rate.
- 15% of the 164-youth assessed had a history of sexual abuse by a parent or sibling or other. This is higher than the state's rate of 6%. Last year's county rate was also 11%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

Q6. Victimization History (youth has been victimized by a peer or older person)

- 12% of the 164-youth assessed had been a victim of sexual assault/exploitation by an older adult or peer. This is higher than the state's rate of 6%. Last year's county rate was 9%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.
- 22% of the 164-youth assessed had been a victim of bullying. This is higher than the state's rate of 11%. Last year's county rate was 19%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.
- 13% of the 164-youth assessed had been physically assaulted. This is higher than the state's rate of 9%. Last year's county rate was 11%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate.

AGGRESSION DOMAIN – 164 Youth Assessed

Q1. Violence

- 35% of the 164-youth assessed bullied or threatened others. This is higher than the state's rate of 22%. Last year's county rate was 32%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.
- 17% of the 164-youth assessed destroyed personal property. This is higher than the state's rate of 12%. Last year's county rate was 18%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. Three-year decreasing trend.
- 51% of the 164-youth assessed had assaultive behavior. This is higher than the state's rate of 39%. Last year's county rate was 43%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.

Employment & Free Time – 164 Youth Assessed

Q1. Employment History –

- 21% of the 164-youth assessed were currently employed. This is higher than the state's rate of 17%. Last year's county rate was 18%, showing an increase from the previous year's rate. Three-year increasing trend.
- 79% of the 164-youth assessed have never been employed. This is higher than the state's rate of 78%. Last year's county rate was 80%, showing a decrease from the previous year's rate. Three-year decreasing trend.

NOTATIONS

The Outreach Committee with representatives from the funded programs and their DJJ partners noted the following:

<u>Data Highlights</u>

The risk and needs levels of the local youth are slightly higher than the state average. However, the strengths level for the youth is high.

The number of referrals to DJJ resulting in court involvement is 91% reflecting the coordination between the juvenile court counselors, law enforcement, SROs, school counselors and program staff.

The age at first referral (under 12 years of age) is much higher than the state average and warrants attention.

Prior detention admission history and prior YDC custody are both lower than the state rate reflecting well on local interventions.

Family members with reported substance abuse, mental health issues and criminal history is between 10% and 50% higher than the state rate. Various possibilities could impact this reporting; however it does warrant attention.

Although reports on living arrangements and parent/custodian supervision warrants attention, 91% of the youth are enrolled full time in school. In addition, regular attendance has increased 10% in the past two years. This reflects well on the restructuring of DJJ staff, school staff and the attention to effective follow through.
This is also evident in the significantly lower number of infractions and interventions compared to the state average.

The academic reports suggest that youth are attending school, however, they are struggling academically. The lack of involvement in school activities was higher than the state average and highlighted as a concern.

Although the association with gang members is low, the negative delinquent influence warrants attention.

Almost half of the youth report alcohol or drug use, which JCC and the programs are confident is under reported and of great concern. This is particularly true with the "age at 1st use' for youth under 12 years of age being reported at 12%, and 76% in middle school. Again, this is expected to be under reported.

41% of the youth report that this use is disruptive of their functioning.

Fully half of the court involved youth report mental health problems, and 51% diagnosed as such. Both current and passed medical treatment for mental health problems are much higher than the state rate.
In an area with higher than usual mental health professionals, cause is difficult to parse out.
Even though victimization and abuse are much higher than the state average, it is also expected to be under reported and is of great concern. Program staff verify that girls in counseling are basically all victims of one, the other or both.
Bullying, threatening, destruction of property, and assaultive behavior are all higher than the state average and warrants the attention of the local collaboratives as well as being a priority for JCPC attention.

Information Reliability

* The local juvenile court counselors not only interview and gather the information reflected in the report, they update it at least every 90 days as more accurate information becomes available.

Gaps and Barriers

* Youth or parent/guardian access to financial resources

* Youth or parent/guardian access to transportation or reliable transportation

* Youth or parent/guardian access to affordable housing. Multiple generations living in housing adequate for one.

* Mental Health issues. Frequently stemming from Covid or Helene disaster has overburdened resources for treatment of anxiety and mental health treatment.

* Lack of adequate assistance in applying for available resources such as Medicaid applications.

* Lack of parental motivation to preserver to access resources, training or adequate youth supervision.

* Lack of insurance or out of reach deductibles.

*There are, as of November 13, 2024, 180-186 Burke County youth in DSS custody. More than can be adequately served by the agency, foster care or alternative facilities, particularly in-state.

Recommended 2026/2027 Priorities for Funding:

Through a risk & needs assessment and a resource assessment, the JCPC Outreach Committee has determined that the following services are needed to reduce or prevent delinquency in Burke County:

*Restitution / Community Service;
*Substance Abuse Assessment & Treatment;
*Sex Offender Assessment & Treatment;
*Psychological Assessments;
*Teen Court;
*Interpersonal Skill Building;
*Parent / Family Skill Building;
*Mediation;
*Counseling;
*Vocational Skill Building;
*Temporary Shelter; and
*Mentoring

Chris Norman made the motion to adjourn at approximately 9:38 A.M.
this was approved by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted by,
A.J. Coutu
10/21/2025