

BECOMING A DATA-DRIVEN JUVENILE JUSTICE ORGANIZATION

THE CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA, EXPERIENCE

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Background

This paper focuses on the Calcasieu Parish Office of Juvenile Justice Services' (OJJS) efforts to become a more “data-driven” juvenile justice organization.¹ While there are many examples of data-driven approaches in the private and public sectors, perhaps the approach most applicable to the juvenile justice field is the “Data-Driven Decision-Making” (DDDM) model that arose in the education realm in the mid-to-late 1990s.

The DDDM began as a system of teaching and classroom/school management practices that, in essence, allows schools to get better information about students into the hands of classroom teachers.² This basic concept, of getting key information into the hands of those who can directly effect change, seems quite applicable to emerging data-driven efforts in juvenile justice, and will be one important focus of this paper. As you will see, Calcasieu Parish has found some innovative and cost-effective ways to create a culture in which quick access to accurate and reliable data drives a range of important decisions.

As with school DDDM reforms, the effort to become more data-driven in juvenile justice is, in part, a reflection of the increased accountability that many juvenile justice agencies have been experiencing over the past 15 to 20 years (e.g., due to budget cuts, political pressures, shifts in juvenile justice philosophies and public attitudes, and other circumstances).

To a greater or lesser extent, the vast majority of juvenile justice organizations recognize the importance of having good data and the need to be able to “use” that data to shed light on the impact of the juvenile justice system. The ways in which such organizations capture, analyze, and “use” that information, however, vary widely. Some organizations have become quite sophisticated with internal research capabilities, information technology resources, and the like. Other organizations, including many small juvenile justice agencies or juvenile courts do not have the luxury of such resources and must share the data load as best they can.

The primary intent of this paper is to show how one jurisdiction in Louisiana is continuing to build its internal capacities and capabilities for producing useful data that help it improve system impact. What is perhaps most notable about the Calcasieu Parish experience is that most if not all of the efforts to become more data-driven have been accomplished without additional funding. In some instances cited here, the efforts to become more data-driven have resulted in substantial cost savings.

Calcasieu Parish/OJJS has been vigorously pursuing and sustaining system reform efforts for a number of years. As a demonstration site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), and as a site for the Models for Change juvenile justice reform initiative supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Calcasieu Parish has demonstrated it is serious about ongoing system improvement. There is a legacy of system reform in Calcasieu Parish and the movement to become more data-driven reflects more than just a passing interest in automation or data. Instead, it reflects a long-standing commitment to “getting better” and recognizing that good data are absolutely essential to sustaining system improvements.

OJJS's interest in ongoing system improvement (including data improvements) does not necessarily set it apart from other juvenile justice organizations in Louisiana. What does set Calcasieu Parish apart are the no-cost, innovative ways in which OJJS first fostered and then enhanced its ability to produce and proactively use good, reliable data.

This paper will also describe how Calcasieu Parish OJJS progressed from an organization that had some internal automated data resources (the Juvenile Case Manager System or JCMS) to a model for others to emulate. This will be done without going into a lot of technical details about the JCMS computer system.³

Key Themes Covered in this Paper

Becoming a more data-driven juvenile justice organization is not something that happens over night or off the top of one's head. It requires commitment and persistence. In Calcasieu Parish, there is ample evidence of a sustained commitment to data-driven improvements. Ten key themes that are evident in Calcasieu Parish and that are described more fully in this paper include:

1. Being willing to critically examine the status of one's data and making good data a priority for the organization;
2. Looking for data management and analyst resources within one's organization, someone who has the right blend of juvenile justice and information technology (IT) experience;
3. Conducting a careful review of existing caseloads, practices, and staff resources to determine if reallocation of resources to support data improvements is possible;
4. Continuously identifying and prioritizing the types of data questions to be answered and creating and/or modifying the automated data system to answer these questions;
5. Creating reports that show the data that answer these questions and that present data in readily understandable formats;
6. Establishing a flexible automated data system that links aggregate data to individual case level data, and that can easily transition from aggregate to individual case level data screen views;
7. Situating the data manager/analyst among or near line staff;
8. Establishing a routine across the organization that promotes active use of data, including dedicated "data time" at every management team meeting;
9. Encouraging ongoing feedback from staff regarding data improvement efforts (i.e., keep asking staff, "Are you getting the information you need to help you do your job?" "Are the data you are receiving helping you understand the impacts that you are having on youth/families/communities?"); and,
10. Having an "open door" policy that actively encourages staff to ask questions of the data manager, and that requires the data manager to regularly interact with staff.

A Look Back

It is informative to take a look at the evolution of Calcasieu Parish's data-driven efforts as they are quite instructive for other agencies trying to improve their data circumstances. In brief, the data environment has evolved from one that had very limited internal automated data resources and expertise, to one that has become a dynamic data driven model.⁴ Not surprisingly, these key shifts in OJJS's data capabilities largely paralleled the agency's commitment to system reform.

In 2004, Calcasieu Parish was selected as a demonstration site for the Annie E. Casey's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). JDAI required OJJS to produce a wide range of data that would allow it to track the impact of changes in detention practices. The ultimate hope for each JDAI site is that the enactment of alternatives to detention would result in a range of less costly community-based alternatives and lower secure detention populations without any deleterious public safety effects. Like other JDAI sites, OJJS engaged in a detailed planning process that included the collection and compilation of data. Through this planning and data acquisition process, OJJS began to recognize the need for better resources in the data collection and data analysis realms.

From 2004 through a good part of 2005, there was no single staff person in OJJS assigned or available to handle all the data entry and data analysis responsibilities aligned with the JDAI and, subsequently, the Models for Change initiative. There was also no one managing the original version of the Juvenile Case Manager System and OJJS largely relied on a local contracted system developer who was not a juvenile justice professional. During this period, the developer kept asking OJJS if they wanted to upgrade the system because it was so difficult to get the original version to work like the organization needed it to work. In effect, data management was a hodge-podge of efforts, compounded by the fact that no one was regularly reviewing the quality of the data.⁵

Pulling data was a real problem. When OJJS administrators would try to run standard statistical reports for a selected one-year period, "it would take forever," administrators now say. Furthermore, the content was not reliable, which meant that staff members were too often called upon to perform hand-counts. Even today, this scenario is all too familiar in too many juvenile justice settings.

Through the obvious frustrations that accompanied these manual data collection processes, OJJS recognized the need to convert to a better system. OJJS administration and line staff, who were also involved in data compilation, could see that improved data capabilities were essential for emerging reform efforts. In important ways, the interest in and commitment to system reforms helped drive data improvement efforts in Calcasieu Parish.

In 2005, OJJS decided it was time to make the leap to an improved automated system, even though, at the time, it did not yet have an assigned person to help steer this process. Because of the lack of internal technical expertise, OJJS was forced to launch a “lean and mobile” conversion process. This took careful planning that eschewed much of the technical focus that can complicate and obliterate well-intended automated system improvement efforts. Instead, OJJS focused on developing a realistic plan that focused on what they wanted their system to do for them and what they wanted their system to look like. They knew what the old system could not do and they took the time, without getting caught up in the latest technical wizardry, to carefully lay out what needed to change. For example, OJJS staff members knew they wanted standardized tabs and they wanted the system to be easily expandable. They also wanted to build in certain key functions for data integrity (to help keep the data “clean”) including required fields that have to be entered before a screen can be closed.

Building Internal Data Capabilities

Early in this planning process, the OJJS Director recognized that the organization needed an internal point person to coordinate the automated system conversion. The Director had been trying to do this as best he could but could not donate sufficient time and, frankly, did not have the technical wherewithal to manage this endeavor. However, during the early stages of system reform, when staff members were volunteering (or were “volunteered”) to help collect and compile data, it became known that one of the OJJS probation officers had received his graduate degree in Instructional Technology.⁶ The OJJS Director discussed the organization’s broader needs with this probation officer. Soon, this officer’s position began the transition from full-time probation officer to half-time probation officer and half-time Special Projects Officer (SPO) responsible for coordinating the automated system conversion.⁷

Certainly, OJJS was fortunate to discover this internal resource among its ranks. But there is an important lesson here; sometimes, you can find the best resource to help you become data-driven among those already working for you.

Building Internal Capacity to Manage Data

Before he became the part-time SPO, the SPO served as a probation officer. He was hired in 2001 and, as indicated, had a degree in Instructional Technology. When the Casey Foundation and MacArthur Foundation reform efforts ensued, the SPO got involved in automation and data-related activities connected to those initiatives. While the OJJS Director was the lead data person early on, he quickly realized that in order to address all of the data challenges faced by OJJS, the

organization needed the SPO’s help more than as a volunteer. Initially, the Director decided to take half of the SPO’s probation caseload away, though soon thereafter, he realized the need to take it all away. The initial data demands of JDAI and then Models for Change, among other demands, required that the SPO become a full-time job.

Meanwhile, the organization was becoming increasingly aware of the need to become more efficient. There was consensus among administrative and line staff that OJJS was doing way too much paperwork and that this was detracting from the more important field work that everyone wanted to be doing, with youth, their families, and the community.

As a result of this shared concern and other data-related issues, OJJS leadership began to brainstorm options for creating a full-time position that could help the organization become more efficient and manage its information needs. The immediate dilemma, of course, was that there was no extra money to create a full-time SPO position. As a result, OJJS administrators and probation supervisors decided to take a close look at their probation caseloads to see if there was some way to shift existing staff resources.

There are many similarities between managing a juvenile justice organization and running a business. You have to have the data that show if you are achieving your goals or not and you have to be willing to adjust when the data show you need to.

-Dane Bolin, Assistant Parish Administrator (former OJJS Director)

Making it Happen ... Without any Money

Over the course of a series of brainstorming meetings, OJJS administrators and supervisors focused on the possibility of shifting existing resources - without compromising public safety or creating workload imbalances among probation officers – to create a full-time data position.

While OJJS realized the need for a full-time data manager, it took some thinking to determine how to best shift existing resources to make the SPO full-time. There was a general sense, initially, that at least some youth on probation in Calcasieu Parish could be either released from probation entirely or shifted to lower levels of supervision.

The transition process began with supervisors carefully reviewing all probation officers’ caseloads, including the small number being handled by the SPO at this time. In effect, OJJS went through a “cleansing” process that allowed it to identify cases that could be safely closed or released. At the same time, the organization also started examining its data more closely to more clearly set levels of probation supervision that reflected different risk levels. After the initial supervisors’ review, all probation officers were asked to examine their caseloads.

This careful examination of existing caseloads confirmed that there were a sufficient number of cases that could either be

released from supervision or that could be moved to lower levels of supervision. Once these were identified, OJJS worked with the juvenile court to close the applicable cases and then equitably spread the remaining cases across other probation officers. At the same time, the OJJS Director went about re-allocating existing resources to make the SPO a full time data and IT focused job. Because no new money was needed, and because there was strong consensus within the organization of the need for this resource and better data, the change was easily attained.

The Importance of Having Someone who Knows Juvenile Justice and Data Centrally Located

Again, the person who became the SPO was originally hired as a probation officer, not an IT person, and it is this blend – of juvenile justice practitioner and IT/Data Manager – that OJJS believes made this person “perfect for the job.”

As noted, during the transition period, the SPO’s caseload was equally divided among all other probation officers. Probation officers readily agreed to this. The benefits became obvious to them rather quickly because as a former probation officer, much of the SPO’s early work focused on helping his colleagues get the data and information they needed to do their jobs even better.

NCJJ has worked in or with thousands of juvenile courts, probation departments, and juvenile justice and child welfare agencies across the country over the past four plus decades. During that time, NCJJ has had the privilege of collaborating with some amazing research professionals employed in these settings. That said, it is remarkable today that so few juvenile justice organizations have adequate internal IT and research capabilities. Even in those agencies that have such resources, it is confounding how often research staffers are located in some remote area of the courthouse or office building, separated from the day to day activities of juvenile justice practitioners. In too many instances, this separation unintentionally results in lost communication opportunities that could more regularly occur if practitioners and those responsible for managing data were not isolated from each other. Maximizing interactional opportunities between the organization’s IT/Data Manager and juvenile justice practitioners (probation, detention, intake, FINS,⁸ anyone else responsible for carrying out the mission of the organization and enforcing the orders of the juvenile court) are critical for achieving staff buy-in, and, ultimately, for becoming a more data-driven organization.

In Calcasieu Parish, because the SPO began as a probation officer and because there was no other office space to put him in, his office remained right in the middle of the probation unit. The SPO’s proximity allows him to work more directly with

staff who not only directly serve a large number of clientele but who also have varying levels of comfort and experience with technology.

Getting the SPO Up To Speed and “Data Tuesdays”

At the onset, OJJS did not provide any special training for the SPO to prepare him for his expanded roles. Instead, the volunteer experience he gained early on provided important IT project experiences and these helped prepare him for the job. The JDAI and Models for Change initiatives also presented opportunities for him to expand his abilities. Over time, he became an integral member of the OJJS management team.⁹

It was zero additional cost to create the SPO’s job. We did not use or ask for any additional general fund or grant dollars to create this position. Since then, we have added a number of other grant-funded positions but we only used existing dollars to fund our data guy.

-Dane Bolin

In addition to keeping the SPO located among and interacting with line staff on a regular basis, OJJS has also been successful in integrating the SPO within its management team structure. One of the most innovative developments in Calcasieu Parish involves the establishment of a

regular data segment, entitled “Tuesdays with Data,” that largely drives weekly management team meetings. The “Tuesdays with Data” management team meeting component began in 2009 and continues today.

With guidance from the SPO at the “Tuesdays with data” meetings, OJJS managers and supervisors are able to examine aggregate data reports and then drill down to more case specific information during the meeting. As the management team looks at an aggregate listing or table say, for example, of youth in detention during a particular week, they are able to click on an individual case or cell and pull up the individual records or profiles of specific youth for more in depth individualized review. This is a key principle in the development of a good data system and a key aspect of becoming more data-driven. This also helps with data quality assurance; that is, by being able to look at an individual record, one can also see if there is something wrong with the data. Many jurisdictions do not link their aggregate data with individual records so there is no way to check on the accuracy or quality of individual level data that feeds the aggregate data. Calcasieu Parish has accomplished this important aspect.

There are two key points here. First, having the capacity to go from aggregate data in a data cell of a table, for example, to individual data that feeds that cell, allows OJJS to actively check data quality. Second, by being able to look at both aggregate level and individual case level data, one can address individual case issues. This can allow case managers to be more proactive because they have access to better information, and can help organizations construct additional data or statistical reports that help them manage key performance areas.

As one general example, during OJJS’s involvement with JDAI and Models for Change, the organization was tracking probation violation (PV) cases that were being detained at a fairly substantial rate. At the “Tuesday’s with data” management team meeting, the SPO presented aggregate PV detention data (related examples are shown in the Detention List and Detention Utilization reports displayed later in this paper) for the applicable period. As discussion ensued, the management team was able to drill down to the specific listing of PV cases that were detained to examine more details about each case, and to brainstorm alternatives and options for those cases. After the meeting, each supervisor set times to meet with the probation officers assigned to these cases to address feasible alternatives to secure confinement. This dynamic data-driven process has helped Calcasieu Parish safely reduce its secure detention population.

Not surprisingly, the SPO’s responsibilities and roles have evolved over time. While the SPO’s primary role is to support the JCMS and all 65 users of the system, the SPO has other responsibilities that warrant further descriptions here and that offer specific examples of how OJJS has become more data-driven. These include creating a variety of innovative and useful data reports, and performing various data quality assurance tasks.

“Push” and “Prompt” Reports

The Juvenile Case Manager System produces a growing range of “push” reports that are automatically generated and sent to applicable system users and their supervisors. Some important examples of push reports include:

- A current listing of who is in secure detention. The Detention List, displayed below (**Table 1**), provides OJJS with an up-to-date listing of all juveniles in secure detention and the reasons they are there. It shows juvenile case numbers, the respective intake dates, the number of days in secure confinement, race/sex, the probation officers’ initials, the referral dates, the statute numbers and names related to the law violations, the pending court dates and hearing types.

The Detention List report, shown below, is automatically “pushed” to all system users. This is important because it provides both timely notification and reminders that probation officers need to pay attention to youth in local custody. When a probation officer sees that he or she has a case in detention (and for how long), the officer can take appropriate action to move that youth to a detention alternative, if there are not compelling reasons to keep a youth detained.

We have an automated detention listing that is always up to date, so when detention workers go to staffing they know the next course of action with a kid. Probation officers enter the data on their cases and detention staff can see what may happen next with a kid. It may be an arraignment scheduled or a trial. This helps us to prepare for what’s ahead rather than just being reactive.
 -Anthony Celestine, OJJS Director of Detention

The Detention List report is more than just a list. It helps to motivate detention and probation staff to keep track of which youth have been in secure confinement the longest, who has court dates that are lagging, how many probation violation cases have been detained, and other important data pieces that OJJS has prioritized to track. This automatic notification/reminder process has positively contributed to OJJS’s JDAI efforts and associated efforts to keep lower risk youth out of detention, without sacrificing public safety.

Days In	Juvenile ¹⁰	Intake Date	Race/Sex	Probation Officer	Statute Name	Court Date	Court Hearing Type
1		9/9/2014	BM	GW	Aggravated Battery	9/12/2014	Continued Custody Hearing
		9/9/2014	WF	ST	Criminal Trespass		
					Simple Criminal Damage To Property		
					Unlawful Entry of Dwelling		
4		9/9/2014	WF	ST	Probation Violation Runaway		
		9/6/2014	BM	OJJ	Curfew Violation Lake Charles Ordinance		
		9/6/2014	BM	BM	Resist Officer/Arrest Flight		
5		9/6/2014	BM	BM	Curfew Violation Lake Charles Ordinance	9/10/2014	Continued Custody Hearing
		9/5/2014	BM	JPJ	Resist Officer/False Identity	9/10/2014	Continued Custody Hearing
5		9/5/2014	BM	JPJ	Disturbing the Peace	10/3/2014	Trial
					Probation Violation	10/3/2014	Trial

- A current listing of youth in out of home placements. This report (a sample appears on the next page, **Table 2**) is pushed daily to all probation officers and staff regardless of whether they have cases in placement or not. It is intended to keep all staff aware of the number of youth who are placed out of home and how long they have been in placement. It is generated every morning so supervisors and the Director can see who is in every out of home placement. OJJS has set certain performance thresholds for examining cases in out of home placements. For example, anyone in placement over 260 days is a trigger to take a closer look (this is primarily sex offender placements, for example). The Comments cells help probation officers keep track of key dates also, and the need to stay on top of their out of home cases. This report is also reviewed

at every “Tuesdays with Data” meeting, reflecting its priority within the organization. Because it is automatically generated and shared, all staff feel compelled to keep the data accurate and, also, are reminded daily of the OJJS goal of limiting out of home placements to only those youth who absolutely need it.

The SPO reviews all of these reports on a regular basis and then monitors the system to see who makes corrections to their data and when they make the corrections. These reports are also reviewed at the “Tuesdays with Data” meeting. Again, what is particularly important is the capacity of the supervisory team to focus on aggregate data first and then, when so inclined, shift to digging deeper to more case-specific data (on the screen in the meeting room) to discuss the status of specific cases, especially

**Table 2: Out of Home Placement Listing
Office of Juvenile Justice Services - Calcasieu Parish**

Program Type Name	Name	Race/Sex	Probation Officer	Referral Date	Days In	Note
Harbour House Placement		BM	AB	9/5/2014	5	Placed at Harbor House pending final disposition on 10/3/2014
		BF	EZ	9/9/2014	1	72 hr cool down
		BM	LL	9/5/2014	5	Pending final disposition on 10-3-14
		BF	AW	9/6/2014	4	Juvenile placed at Harbor House , will go to continued custody hearing on Wednesday 9/10/14
Group Home		WM	DE	12/10/2013	274	Disposition Review-October 22, 2014
		WM	TE	7/31/2014	41	Private placement through Medicaid at Methodist Children's Home in Sulphur, La. No time table for return
		BM	CH	8/4/2014	37	Youth privately placed at Diamond Ranch Academy in Hurricane, Utah
		WM	BP	7/30/2012	772	Methodist Children's Home-Ruston: Timeline unknown. Children's Services custody
Inpatient Treatment		WF	MR	7/2/2014	70	Devereux in League City, TX; release date unknown
		BF	PL	7/1/2014	71	Juv was approved to the Methodist Children Home in Ruston. Will leave today/ no later than tomorrow. Expected stay unsure at this time
Pine Crest		BM	TP	9/19/2013	356	Department of Health and Hospital's custody. Timeline will be assessed at the Disp. Review on Sept, 8 2014
Youth Challenge Program		HLM	KC	6/3/2014	99	Youth at Youth Challenge Program scheduled end date is Nov 16th
		WM	MC	4/13/2014	150	Grad 9/14 Camp Carville La.
		WF	RR	7/13/2014	59	Started July 13th in Pineville. Scheduled end date is November 16th

those that are either exceeding the department’s length of stay goal for out of home placement or at risk of exceeding that goal.

Dashboard Reports

In addition to the automatic “push” reports, OJJS has created a series of automated Dashboard reports. These reports also reflect how the organization is producing data that can help staffers do their jobs and thus, furthers the organization’s data-driven efforts. In general, these reports include a range of listings and/or statistical summaries that have been requested by staff, and that can be easily obtained (e.g., by clicking on the appropriate Dashboard button or cell).

One example of a useful Dashboard report is displayed below (**Table 3**) the “OJJS Programs Dashboard.” It provides key summary information for every program tied to OJJS. It is kept up to date through the data entry efforts of probation officers who enter applicable information on referrals they make to these programs (e.g., information related to openings or pending cases). This summary is useful for obvious reasons, including keeping all staff and the management team apprised of how many youth may be waiting (see the Pending column, for example) to participate in particular programs.

Making the Data Useful

Overall, the evolution from part-time SPO to full time SPO (and more recently to full time Data Analyst) reflects OJJS’s emphasis on making data useful for OJJS personnel. One of the most important dynamics in this regard has been the SPO’s regular interaction with system users and practitioners within the organization. In addition to being located amidst his colleagues, the SPO has an open door policy that encourages staff members to come in to his office at any time to ask questions about data or the automated system.

Again, the SPO’s role is not simply to manage an automated database. The SPO also generates a wide range of statistics that inform the organizations’ system reform efforts. In this regard, the SPO has played instrumental roles in:

- Managing data for JDAI including producing the JDAI reports.
- Providing the data for Vera Institute for the Models for Change Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) baseline study and outcome evaluation.
- Working with the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project (NYSAP) and NCJJ on another

Program Name	Active	Pending	Current Status	Point of Contact	Fee/Ins
Electronic Monitoring	16		Limited Openings	BF	N/A
Home Detention	17		Open	BF	N/A
Behavioral Health Center	3				
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	8	1	Open	AA	0
Family Preservation	1	1	Open-age 6-12	MA	0
Harbour House Placement	5		7 - Beds	DS	0
Anger Management Group	7	17	Current group every Thursday May 1st to May 22nd	AA	0
Girls Group		1	Not applicable at this time	AA	0
Individual Counseling	17	2	Open	AA	0
Group Counseling	2	2	Open	KB	\$5-15
Marine Institute	3		No Longer Available		
Cognitive Development Center	4		Open		N/A
Multisystemic Therapy	4	1	No openings at this time	TH	Medicaid
OJJS-Crime Victim Counseling	19	14	Open availability	AA	0
OJJS-Functional Family Therapy	28	11	Open age 12-17	AA	0
OJJS-Psychological Evaluation		6	Open	AA	N/A
OJJS-Shoplift Accountability Program	1	48	Next open May 20th	AA	\$5 TEEN COURT / \$25 1st & \$35 2nd
OJJS-Work Project	4	14	Full for June 7th	AA	N/A
Rehabilitation Services of Southwest LA.	11				
Youth Challenge Program	18	4	16-18 years old	LA Army National Guard	N/A

Models for Change initiative to ensure that the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) tool is being properly scored and that the data tied to the SAVRY are valid.¹¹

- Constructing and producing a range of ad hoc reports that are built into the Juvenile Case Manager System - it used to cost OJJS substantial funds to create *ad hoc* reports, but now the organization can do it internally without the expense of outside consultants or programmers.

With the advent and expansion of the full-time OJJS Data Analyst role, OJJS stands poised to sustain and enhance its data-driven efforts.

Data Come First at the Weekly Supervisors' Meetings

As noted earlier, every weekly supervisors' meeting, begins with a data review segment that covers the priority issues of the agency. In addition to the OJJS Director, the SPO, and other managers, all unit supervisors attend the weekly meetings. The units represented include detention, probation, intake, and FINS.

The meeting always begins with a data presentation facilitated by the OJJS Director and the SPO, and that uses the JCMS system "live" in the meeting room.

NCJJ has had the opportunity to observe a number of the weekly "Tuesdays with Data" management team meetings, and it is these meetings that really demonstrate OJJS's commitment to being data-driven. To provide one example, Calcasieu Parish closely tracks a variety of detention indicators connected to its Juvenile Detention Alternatives (JDAI) initiative. The following report presents one example (there are others) of the types of data that are frequently reviewed and discussed at the management team meetings.

The example (see below, **Table 4**) shows a summary report covering the RAI, the tool used to help determine or screen detention admissions in Calcasieu Parish. This report is routinely distributed to the supervisors at the onset of the meeting and an electronic JCMS version of this report is projected on the screen in the meeting room. OJJS has direct access to its automated database in the meeting room through

**Table 4: Referrals Screened (Risk Assessment Instrument Scores)
Calcasieu Parish - Office of Juvenile Justice Services
Second Quarter-2014**

	Detained			Released with Conditions						Released			Total						
	High Score		Medium Score	Low Score		High Score		Medium Score	Low Score										
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%								
Female	6	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Male	33	85%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	35
African Am	29	74%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30
Asian	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Caucasian	10	26%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Latino	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	39		1		0		0		1		0		0		0		0		41

Judicial Overrides- Detained Total

	High Score		Medium Score		Low Score		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Female	5	38%	8	24%	3	43%	16
Male	8	62%	25	76%	4	57%	37
African Am	11	85%	20	61%	6	86%	37
Asian	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Caucasian	2	15%	12	36%	1	14%	15
Latino	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	1
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	13		33		7		53

Total Screened: 94

a simple hookup – this allows the management team to review any aggregate and/or individual case information – clicking on aggregate numbers, for example, will produce an actual listing of those cases, and then clicking on an individual name or case number will bring up that youth’s electronic case file or Face Sheet.

The Referrals Screened (RAI) tables (see Page 8, **Table 4**) show that 94 referrals (in this instance, “referrals” refer to juveniles, some of who may have been referred more than once) were screened during this period.¹² Of the 94 youth screened, 39 youth who scored high on the RAI were detained for some period during the quarter, and one youth who scored moderate on the RAI was detained (and one was released).

Judicial overrides of the RAI are also an important variable in detention decisions in Calcasieu Parish (i.e., if the RAI and/or decisions to detain or not detain are frequently overridden by judges, there may be a need to revise the RAI, for example). As shown in the accompanying Judicial Overrides – Detained table on the next page, it appears that judges ordered detention for a total of 53 juveniles (out of the 94 referrals) during the quarter, overriding initial recommendations not to detain these youth. This is a substantial number of overrides, and includes 33 cases that scored moderate on the RAI and 7 youth who scored low. The OJJS management team can take a close look at these cases on the JCMS, determine which factors the judges may be considering in ordering detention (for the moderate and low risk cases, for example), and then discuss the data with the judges at the appropriate time.

In addition, like many jurisdictions, OJJS is particularly concerned and interested in persistent challenges related to disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in detention. The Referrals Screened report shows that 74% (29 youth) of the youth with high RAI scores and who were not subject to judicial overrides, were detained during this period were African Americans. For the same period, roughly 70% of the youth who were detained as a result of judicial overrides, were African Americans. As a result, the management team would again dig down into the individual case level data to determine what factors may be contributing to the substantial percentage of African American youth being detained during the quarter, and would leave the meeting with possible options or strategies for addressing this persistent issue.

As indicated, the main point here is that the OJJS management team is “using” up to date data, at the aggregate and individual levels, to help identify options and/or strategies for addressing priority issues.

Establishing Performance Indicators

Back in 2006 when OJJS really began to recognize the need to become more data-driven, it also recognized the need to address an immediate priority for probation officers. Specifically, probation officers had been complaining that they were spending more and more time in the courthouse and less time in the field working with youth and families. To address this concern, the OJJS Director and the supervisory team decided to make the reduction in court time an immediate goal. This effort began with first establishing an overall goal of having probation officers spend no more than 10% of their work week in court. The next step was to enable the JCMS to accurately track “units of service” (time) and to have the probation officers be vigilant in correctly entering the data. In short, when the probation officers enter their daily case dictation they also enter their units of service in quarter hour increments. So, on the day a probation officer is in court, he or she enters the amount of time in 15-minute increments along with the regular dictation covering what happened in court that day. Entering the 15-minute time increment units has had virtually no effect on probation officer data entry time demands.

As shown in the example (see page 10, **Table 5**) (edited by NCJJ for display and space considerations), the Officer Dashboard tracks a number of key performance measures that are considered most relevant by/for line level probation officers. These include a listing of cases requiring SAVRY administration, pending case plans (alerting officers to prepare these plans), pending court cases (alerting officers to be ready for upcoming proceedings), a listing of the officer’s current caseload, a summary of the officer’s weekly units of services (showing hours in the field or FTF and hours in court), a listing of cases and when they were “last touched” (i.e., contacted, alerting officers to who may need to be contacted consistent with OJJS policies), a listing of cases in ATDs, and a listing of cases in out of home placements and how long these cases have been in placement.

What seems critical here, as it relates to becoming a data-driven organization, is that OJJS recognized how important it was at the onset to deliver a substantive benefit to those in the field so that they would recognize the importance and relevance of good data. In this case, it was the probation officer outcry over time in court that eventually led to the production of data (units of service) that showed precisely how much time officers were spending in court. Subsequently, this dashboard added other key performance indicators considered to be priorities by probation staff and the management team.

We measure time, what probation officers do in the field, in the office, in court. By carefully examining and tracking time we can help officers become more efficient and, hopefully, more effective.

-Dane Bolin

Table 5: Officer Dashboard (9/13/14)

SAVRY	Date due	My Caseload			Last Touched	
Name	9/13/14	Name	B/M	Add Units of Service	Name	7/13/14
Name	9/13/14	Name	B/M	Add Units of Service	Name	7/21/14
Name	9/14/14	Name	B/F	Add Units of Service	Name	8/21/14
Pending Case Plans		My Weekly Units of Service			Alternatives to Detention	
Name		Current week	Face to Face Court	15 2	Name	Electronic Monitoring 33 days
Name		Last week	Face to Face Court	34 13	Name	Electronic Monitoring 26 days
Pending Court Cases			Out of Home Placements			
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Hearing Type</u>		<u>Placement</u>	<u>Days</u>	
Name	9/15/14	Status	Name	Central Group Home	180 days	
Name	9/17/14	Review	Name	State Residential Treatment Center	150 days	
News (OJJS Updates)						

Jeff Vander appointed as full time Juvenile Justice Data Analyst.

Improving Data Quality

The OJJS data quality approach has evolved into a multi-pronged effort that relies not only on the SPO but also regular data quality reviews by unit supervisors and strong cooperation among staff members. For example, in addition to the SPO’s routine data quality reviews, OJJS has instituted periodic quality assurance checks that are conducted by all unit supervisors. At a minimum, each unit supervisor reviews at least three cases each week to see where data may be missing or incorrect. These reviews usually catch data entry or coding errors. In keeping with the positive approach to maintaining data quality, when the supervisors do their quality checks, they provide timely and straightforward feedback to their staff. As a result, staff members make prompt changes. After the changes are made in the system, staffers send emails to their supervisors confirming that the corrections have been made.

Because the SPO has very strong credibility and rapport with probation officers and others in the organization who are responsible for entering data, OJJS largely avoids finger-pointing exchanges that can occur when data entry errors or other data quality issues are identified. Such counter-productive interactions are often based on the perception that data entry errors reflect carelessness or worse. This is not the case in Calcasieu Parish. By regularly interacting with system users and by routinely reviewing data for the internal Q/A monitoring process, the SPO has found that data entry mistakes are rarely

The Director has to be willing to allow real debate in these meetings. We meet for 2 hours every week. We have to look at our data to make sure we are all on the same page.
-William A. Sommers, Current OJJS Director

due to user carelessness. Instead, this interactive process has helped OJJS realize that achieving and maintaining a high level of data quality is indeed an ongoing learning process that needs continuous attention and support, and is truly a team effort.

Lessons Learned

There are important lessons that can be learned from Calcasieu Parish’s efforts to enhance its data quality, regardless of whether a juvenile justice organization has the benefit of automated system resources or has to rely on manual/paper file data sources. Other juvenile justice organizations may want to consider the following basic steps:

- Select a data quality assurance coordinator who will report directly to the organization’s director. This will reduce the dynamic tension that may arise if a data quality person is under the supervision of someone whose data are also under review (in Calcasieu Parish, the SPO reported directly to the OJJS Director, he is not a subordinate of any of the other supervisors).
- Carefully weigh the possible advantages and drawbacks of having key line staff (e.g., probation officers, others) being responsible for entering the data (this has clearly proven to be advantageous in Calcasieu Parish) versus having a centralized data entry point that is removed from line-level practitioners.
- Adopt a clear internal Q/A policy that will not tolerate finger pointing for data entry errors.

- Adopt a data Q/A approach that can easily identify the name/date/time of the person who entered the data.
- Limit data quality reviews to a manageable number of data fields that do not place undue time demands on unit supervisors or other persons responsible for data Q/A.
- Use screen edits and required fields (i.e., features that will not let users out of a screen or will not let them move to the next screen without proper entries). OJJS has expanded JCMS screen edits to alert users that an entry is missing or may be incorrect. The JCMS has required fields including race, gender, age, zone (zip code), parish, and others that are required entries when a new case is opened in the system. In Calcasieu Parish, a user cannot close a case if client services data are pending or not completed, a court hearing is pending, or if other key events are missing (the system will not let users close cases without addressing these data gaps).
- As applicable (i.e., for those with automated data systems), create automated “exception” or error reports to show possible data entry errors and/or missing data.
- Adopt a pro-active data quality response that results in trained supervisors (or the SPO) sitting down with persons who are experiencing data quality challenges to address their individual training needs in a positive manner.

In Calcasieu Parish, we are at the point where POs readily help each other with their data entry and data quality needs. Plus, we created an error report for our system that scours the list for any missing items or past due entries, and it generates a report. The report goes to the senior probation officer who has to follow up and make sure things are corrected.

-Jeff Vander, former SPO, now Juvenile Justice Data Analyst

The Evolution from Part-Time SPO to Full Time Juvenile Justice Data Analyst

In July 2014, the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury (the parish authority that oversees OJJS), approved creation of a full-time juvenile justice Data Analyst position at OJJS. The former SPO, who most recently had also served as the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for OJJS, was promoted to the new Data Analyst position. In effect, the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury recognized just how important good juvenile justice data are for the community and created this new job. The full-time Data Analyst will have even more time to enhance local data-driven efforts to better meet the needs of the parish.

Summary

Ever shifting fiscal climates, concerns over or opposition to reform efforts, the emergence of evidence-based practices, and other factors, make the timely collection and application of good data even more of an imperative as juvenile justice organizations are called upon to justify their existence and prove their value. That said, becoming a data-driven juvenile

justice organization does not happen overnight. As we can see in Calcasieu Parish, it takes time, strong leadership, and some good fortune to make this happen.

While Calcasieu Parish has been successful with its data-driven initiatives in many important ways, they are not the only data-driven juvenile justice organization in Louisiana or in the country. The Models for Change initiative has engaged a number of sites that have become increasingly data-driven as they have moved forward with system reforms. What does make Calcasieu Parish unique, however, is their ability to identify and enact substantive changes with minimal or no additional costs.

The lessons learned from the Calcasieu Parish experience are applicable to any sized juvenile justice organization, be it a large urban setting or a small rural department. A good sampling of these lessons has been described in some detail in this paper.

The ten most salient aspects learned from Calcasieu Parish’s data-driven efforts include:

1. Becoming “data-driven” means different things in different contexts though it often begins with recognizing the need to improve one’s data – this recognition must be accompanied by strong commitment from the leadership of the organization to make data and data-driven innovation top priorities. In important ways, interest in and commitment to system reform can help jump-start data improvement efforts.
2. Regardless of the setting, building internal capacities to become more data-driven may be accomplished at little or no cost to the organization, and sometimes one can find the best staff resource for becoming more data-driven among those already working in the agency. That said, achieving the level and quality of data-driven capabilities found in Calcasieu Parish has required an ongoing commitment of resources.
3. Making it a top priority to produce accurate, reliable, and meaningful data and to directly link that data to important decisions about practices, programs, and resources.
4. Creating an internal staff resource, even in the face of budget constraints, to help all staff understand the importance of good data. The ideal blend for an internal data resource person is someone who has been a juvenile justice practitioner and who has an interest in or some experience with information technology. The internal data person cannot be isolated from key staff; in fact, this person needs to be located among them to maximize interaction opportunities. The organization director and the internal

- data person should interact on an almost daily basis – this should be a routine but dynamic process geared toward goal-setting and problem-solving.
5. Shifting existing resources – without compromising public safety or creating workload imbalances – may enable a juvenile justice agency to create a part-time or full time data position and/or improve data-related capacities. Conducting a careful examination of existing caseloads may reveal that there are sufficient numbers of probation cases, for example, that can either be released from supervision or that can be moved to lower levels of supervision, allowing the organization to reallocate resources.
 6. Focusing the early stage data-driven effort on producing information that helps key personnel do their jobs, particularly if these personnel will also be entering data. Ensuring that all applicable staff members have a role in identifying the key data and reports they need to do their jobs, and providing a continuous and open feedback process that allows staff to offer suggestions, will strengthen buy-in for the data-driven approach. It is essential to be able to get key information into the hands of those who can directly effect change as promptly as possible.
 7. Carefully examining technological advances that allow for the use of an internet application for remote and secure data entry using laptops and air cards.¹³ This can result in more accurate and timely data entry.
 8. Beginning every supervisor’s or management team meeting with a substantive data segment focusing on aggregate data first and then, when so inclined, digging deeper to more case-specific data to discuss the status of specific cases – all while setting a tone that encourages all supervisors to participate.
 9. Recognizing that there are different levels of technical know-how in any organization – there are those of the Facebook generation and those who are more comfortable using “clay tablets” – both will play critical roles in efforts to become more data-driven.
 10. Instituting regular data quality assurance checks that are conducted by all unit supervisors. Achieving a consistently high level of data quality/reliability takes time – it is an ongoing learning process that needs continuous attention and support, and it is truly a team effort.

Having good data has helped us acquire millions of dollars in grant funds and has helped us become much more efficient.

-Vi Martin, OJJS Quality Assurance Manager

Ongoing Challenges

While Calcasieu Parish has achieved some important data-driven accomplishments, there are challenges ahead. These are briefly outlined below:

- With 65 users it can be a challenge to get information out to everyone regarding how to use the latest system features.

- The JCMS is not linked or integrated with the Children In Need of Services database (CHINS, often referred to as dependency or abuse/neglect cases in other jurisdictions). The CHINS data are being entered into a different system at the court level. Although the Juvenile Case Manager System does capture some level of data related to CHINS involvement, OJJS does not have access to formal CHINS data. This is an important shortcoming because of the need to know whether a juvenile justice-involved youth is also involved on the abuse/neglect side of the court.¹⁴
- As noted earlier, the JCMS is not integrated or linked with the parish juvenile court’s automated data system. Court-related data have to be entered into JCMS by OJJS staff.
- The current format of at least some of the standard quarterly statistical reports can be overwhelming. The data analyst is in the process of building the system logic that will allow for improving the usability of these reports (i.e., many of these reports are in table format and contain large amounts of numbers).
 - There may be continuing challenges collecting baseline data on youth and families that have walked in seeking help from the MARC.

Sustaining Data-Driven Reforms

Over the past few years, OJJS has continued to improve its automated system capabilities. In January 2009, it revamped the JCMS to allow it to go mobile. All probation officers have laptops and air cards so they can securely access the system throughout Calcasieu Parish. This allows real-time access to the database. It has also significantly improved data entry at the ground level because officers can catch up on their data entry when they experience down-time (e.g., while waiting for court). More recently, OJJS worked with the JCMS developer to convert the system to a web-based platform.

The data-driven momentum that OJJS has created will not soon disappear. “Tuesdays with Data” have continued, long after grant-funded initiatives ceased. The impetus and motivation behind OJJS’s data-driven efforts seem to have reached self-sustaining levels. Short of a complete change in organization leadership and staff makeup, it seems highly unlikely that data-driven reforms can be stopped in Calcasieu Parish. Despite important ongoing challenges, all juvenile justice organizations interested in improving their data and data-driven decision-making capabilities can learn important lessons from the Calcasieu Parish experience.

Endnotes

¹ Throughout this paper, Calcasieu Parish or OJJS will both denote the Calcasieu Parish Office of Juvenile Justice Services, an office of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury.

² For an extensive listing of scholarly articles on data-driven education reforms go to http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=data+driven+education&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholar

³ The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) and Vera Institute for Justice have written more detailed descriptions of versions of the OJJS automated Juvenile Case Manager System. However, to obtain the most up to date information on the JCMS, including its web-based platform, readers should contact Jeff Vander, OJJS Data Analyst, at jvander@cppj.net. It is also important to note that the JCMS is not linked to nor integrated with the Calcasieu Parish Juvenile Court's automated information system.

⁴ It is probably important to note here that, in the Calcasieu Parish context, being "data-driven" does not mean that individual or unique circumstances are not considered or weighed when making decisions in individual cases. In fact, having good data helps OJJS make more informed decisions in individual circumstances.

⁵ The JCMS was converted to a web-based platform in 2013.

⁶ In fact, this probation officer had been volunteering to help with automation efforts soon after system reforms were launched in Calcasieu Parish, but initially this person was viewed as a probation officer, not as someone who eventually could really help manage a broader data-driven effort.

⁷ Later in the paper, it is noted that the part-time SPO position has been upgraded to a full-time juvenile justice data analyst position (as of July 2014). However, because this development is so recent, and in order to give the Calcasieu experience proper historical context, this paper focuses on the evolution of the SPO's role.

⁸ FINS refers to Families In Need of Services cases. It is the acronym/term used to describe status offenders.

⁹ In 2010, OJJS decided to promote the SPO (which, in effect, was a working title) to a higher probation officer classification – Probation Officer III.

¹⁰ The actual names of juveniles have been omitted from this listing and others to protect confidentiality. However, in the actual list, each juvenile's name appears and system users can click on that name to view the individual case profile (or electronic file or face sheet) for that individual youth. Furthermore, individual case information can also be easily accessed at the weekly management team meetings.

¹¹ SAVRY refers to the "Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth." It is a validated risk assessment tool that is now being used statewide in Louisiana. For more information on the SAVRY, go to <http://www.modelsforchange.net/searchresults.aspx?q=SAVRY&subCol=mfc-publications>

¹² OJJS routinely generates a wide range of detention reports that are not shown here due to space considerations. One report, "Detention Utilization," displays data that indicated that the average daily population (ADP) during the second quarter of 2014 was 29 and the average length of stay (ALOS) was 23 days for female detainees at the end of the quarter (N = 8 females) and 22 days for male detainees (N = 19). Again, these data are routinely reviewed to determine if OJJS is meeting detention population and length of stay performance goals.

¹³ Air cards permit lap top users to have wireless access to the internet application.

¹⁴ NCJJ's research examining the prevalence and case characteristics of multi-system or "dual status" youth and the work of the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, highlight the importance of promptly identifying and intervening with juveniles who have juvenile

justice and child welfare involvement. In brief, such youth present a range of challenges including higher recidivism rates, younger ages at first referral, higher felony offense rates, more frequent placement changes, and other risk factors that warrant prompt identification across and within juvenile justice and child welfare agencies. For more information, see Halemba, G. & Siegel, G. Doorways to Delinquency: Multi-System Involvement of Delinquent Youth in King County (WA). Models for Change. September 23, 2011. For more information on the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice and its work pertaining to dual status youth, go to <http://www.rfkncrj.org>

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The author wishes to express his gratitude to the leadership and staff members of the Office of Juvenile Justice Services in Calcasieu Parish. Their commitment to becoming a more data-driven organization and their spirit of innovation truly reflect a model for others to emulate.