

Community Based Juvenile Justice Programs

Office of the Norfolk District Attorney

January 30, 2021

During 2020, the Norfolk District Attorney's office administered twenty-four community based juvenile justice programs (school safety forums) serving twenty-seven communities in the County of Norfolk. These programs were designed to help coordinate the efforts of school systems, law enforcement, the Norfolk County Juvenile Probation Department, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, as appropriate, to help develop positive interventions for court-involved and at-risk juveniles. Additionally, these confidential forums may serve to identify those juveniles whose violent behavior could potentially pose a danger to school systems and communities, and to help coordinate informational resources and other potential interventions designed to help maintain school safety and help deter the recurrence of violence.

These collaborative school safety forums have been in place in the Norfolk District for more than eighteen years. The Norfolk District Attorney's Office has taken a leadership position in scheduling these meetings, and in trying to facilitate and maintain open lines of communication between the partner agencies. The Norfolk District Attorney's Office encourages and supports the regular participation of relevant agencies, as appropriate. Partner agencies may choose to explain the specific services and interventions they may have available, as well as any relevant criteria and protocols for accessing such services. The forums have been an effective venue for agencies to share informational resources. The Norfolk District Attorney's Office endeavors to assign an Assistant District Attorney from the Norfolk District Attorney's Juvenile Justice Unit to each confidential forum. This Office initiates discussions about individual cases, and invites input from the collaborative agencies regarding individuals whose alleged conduct may pose a threat to schools, neighborhoods and communities. These collaborative agencies include Juvenile Probation, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Youth Services, as well as the schools and local law enforcement. General school safety concerns, precautions, and perceived trends are also discussed to further support school and community prevention efforts.

The Norfolk Juvenile Court in Dedham services the nineteen communities of Avon, Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Franklin, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Needham, Norfolk, Norwood, Plainville, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, Wellesley, Westwood, and Wrentham. There were approximately **96** felony cases prioritized for discussion at the community based juvenile justice programs in this service area. The Juvenile Session of the Quincy District Court services the seven communities of Braintree, Cohasset, Holbrook, Milton, Quincy, Randolph, and Weymouth. There were approximately **131** felony cases prioritized for discussion at the community based juvenile justice programs in this service area. There were **13** felony cases prioritized for discussion in Brookline. Additional adult co-defendant court proceedings were also discussed as appropriate.

Currently, the Dedham Juvenile Court has a delinquency session two days per week and the Quincy Juvenile Court has a delinquency session three days per week.

The Norfolk District Attorney's Office provides strategic, targeted prevention, education and training to our 28 communities and 34 public school districts. In 2020, we adapted our programming wherever possible to remote/virtual access due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures, hybrid or remote learning and meeting size limitations. Our programming targeted the leading causes of student discipline, court involvement and preventable death (substance use and impaired and distracted driving) with emphasis on mental and behavioral health. We offered the following in 2020:

1. Provided Hidden in Plain Sight Grant to Norfolk County public high schools and community coalitions to educate parents on the signs of substance use by teens;
2. Provided TEAM RIVAL substance use prevention programming for 34 public high schools;
3. Provided Distractology, an online distracted driving prevention and education program for teens in partnership with Arbella Insurance;
4. Provided smokeSCREEN, an online vape prevention and education game for teens in partnership with Yale University School of Medicine;
5. Developed a training for school resource officers to satisfy the mandates of Criminal Justice Reform in partnership with the MPTC;
6. Provided the Good Decisions Class in partnership with Bay State Community Health as part of the Norfolk County Diversion Program, and to public high schools to incorporate in a disciplinary incident involving substance use and related risk taking even if teen is not court involved;
7. Provided access to a master's level clinician for access at no cost to behavioral and mental health evaluation and referral to treatment for teens and young adults in Norfolk County in partnership with Bay State Community Health;
8. Hosted monthly Community Coalition meetings for substance use prevention;
9. Hosted virtual county-wide Mandated Reporter training for schools and school resource officers in partnership with Norfolk Advocates for Children;
10. Hosted virtual Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center's anti-bullying training;
11. Continued to provide Collaborative Problem Solving funding to Norfolk County public high schools, in collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital;
12. Developed and distributed a COVID resource guide for families in Norfolk County.