



POLICY ON SCHOOL JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS

REVISED FEBRUARY 2022

- PURPOSE.** The purpose of this policy is to comply with S.L. 2017-57 § 16D.4.(aa) (“Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act”), which became effective July 1, 2017, and requires the director of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) to “[p]rescribe policies and procedures for chief district court judges to establish school justice partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local boards of education, and local school administrative units with the goal of reducing in-school arrests, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions.”
- GOALS.** School justice partnerships (SJPs) are judicially led multi-agency collaborative teams that establish specific guidelines for school discipline in a way that minimizes suspensions, expulsions, and school-based referrals to court for minor misconduct. SJPs aim to reduce the number of suspensions, expulsions, and school-based referrals to the justice system by timely and constructively addressing student misconduct when and where it happens, helping students succeed in school and preventing negative outcomes for both youth and their communities. SJPs also create partnerships that can be convened to address other school and juvenile related matters within a community.
- THE ROLE OF CHIEF DISTRICT COURT JUDGES AS “CONVENERS.”** Judicial leadership is a key component of the successful implementation of an SJP. Therefore, it is the policy of the NCAOC that chief district court judges will use their authority as “conveners” to bring together key stakeholders within their local communities to develop and implement a SJP Memorandum of Understanding.
- SCHOOL JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP TOOLKIT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT.** To assist chief district court judges in their roles as conveners, the NCAOC has provided an [SJP Toolkit](#), which contains a step-by-step guide for developing and implementing an SJP Memorandum of Understanding, along with tools, such as templates, a sample project timeline and meeting agenda, a model Memorandum of Understanding, a sample graduated response model, contacts for administrative and expert support, and decision-making flowcharts. The Toolkit explains the key components of an SJP Memorandum of Understanding, which include:
 - Defining the role of law enforcement and school resource officers in schools;
 - Developing a system of Graduated Responses for school-based misconduct; and
 - Determining how the SJP team will track and share data and monitor progress.

The NCAOC also will offer technical support to help facilitate communication within the local SJP by providing assistance to judges in convening and coordinating initial meetings and media events, identifying speakers, and by helping to identify the necessary local stakeholders.

APPROVED: _____

Andrew T. Heath, Director
North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

DATE: February 1, 2022

