

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS**

**EVALUATION OF CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARDS  
FOR PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION  
ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY**

**Final Report**

**August 2004**

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ADVISORY BOARDS  
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**Table of Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction.....	1
A. Overview.....	5
B. CJAB Origins and Development .....	6
1. Foundational reasons .....	6
2. Stages of development.....	7
3. Realistic sense of identity.....	9
4. Building for success.....	11
C. Leadership, Staffing, and Facilitation.....	11
1. Leadership.....	11
2. Staff support.....	16
3. Facilitation.....	19
D. Membership and Communications.....	20
1. Membership.....	20
a. Size.....	20
b. System components represented.....	21
c. Breadth of inclusion.....	22
d. Cultural blends.....	25
2. Communications.....	28
a. Internal communication.....	28
b. External communication.....	29
E. Role and Process.....	31
1. Role.....	31
2. CJAB plenary session process.....	32
3. CJAB committees.....	35
F. Issues and Initiatives.....	38
G. Success.....	43
Conclusion .....	47

## List of Tables

Table 1:	Population Range Among Seven Counties.....	2
Table 2:	Summary Information on Site Visits.....	2
Table 3:	Interview Distribution by County.....	4
Table 4	CJAB Foundational Reasons.....	6
Table 5:	CJABs by Stage of Development.....	8
Table 6 :	CJAB Leadership Models.....	13
Table 7:	CJAB Staff Support Configuration.....	18
Table 8:	CJAB Membership by County.....	21
Table 9:	Agencies Sometimes Represented on CJABs.....	22
Table 10:	CJAB Meeting Frequency.....	33
Table 11:	Committee Structure of CJABs.....	37

## **EVALUATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARDS**

### **Introduction**

Roughly 30 Pennsylvania counties have Criminal Justice Advisory Boards (CJABs), most of them quite new. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) has fostered this development, perceiving the potential of these boards in coordinating criminal justice programs and grant strategy. PCCD initiated this evaluation that is based largely on a survey of seven CJABs. Each CJAB reflects the county ethos and, although similar in some regards to other CJABs, develops in its own way. Despite these differences, they are subject to a common definition:

Criminal Justice Advisory Boards are policy level, problem-solving groups that include judges, county commissioners, district attorneys, police chiefs, wardens, chief probation officers, directors of health and human services, and others with the stature to influence the administration of justice within a county. The boards are chaired by a designated policy maker and meet on a regular basis to address the needs of the criminal justice system.

A fundamental policy issue is the extent to which such boards should be regulated to achieve higher commonality, or even mandated. The survey of seven CJABs bears on this issue. It also is intended as a guide for new and incipient CJABs to learn from the experience of other counties.

The core requirement of an evaluation of CJABs for the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) was site visits to seven counties with CJABS. In the period October 2003 through January 2004, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) made site visits to: Berks County, Centre County, Chester County, Cumberland County, Franklin County, Lycoming County, and Pike County. The counties were selected by an advisory board appointed by PCCD. The board members were:

Art Amann, Mercyhurst College, Erie County  
Honorable Rebecca Burke, Commissioner, Lycoming County  
Thomas King, Chief, State College Borough Police Department  
Chad Firestone, IT Policy Specialist, JNET  
Susan Schellenberg, Court Administrator, Lehigh County  
Ann Schwartzman of Criminal Justice Associates

The board applied the following criteria in choosing counties:

- In operation long enough to be an appropriate subject for observation

- Diversity in leadership models, basically the roles of major elected officials in the CJAB – judges and commissioners
- Diversity in age

Although not specifically mentioned as a criterion, there proved to be diversity in population. Berks and Chester counties are populous, and the former contains Reading, a city of 78,000 people that offers an urban demographic feature. Pike County was a fortuitous inclusion as it offers an insight into the problems faced by a CJAB in a small county with limited resources.

**Table 1: Population Range Among Seven Counties**

<b>County</b>	<b>Population</b>
Chester	430,000
Berks	373,000
Cumberland	216,000
Centre	136,000
Franklin	130,000
Lycoming	120,000
Pike	49,000

In addition, the committee suggested a contact person in each selected county, usually the person who provided staff support for the CJAB. This was essential in setting up interviews and obtaining data. The data response was quite varied. The first step in each county was setting up a date for the visit to accommodate major officials on the CJAB. Where possible, the visit was timed to coincide with a CJAB meeting. Table 2 indicates the date of the visit, the contact person, and whether the visit coincided with a CJAB meeting.

**Table 2: Summary Information on Site Visits**

<b>County</b>	<b>Dates of Visit</b>	<b>Contact Person/CJAB Coordinator</b>	<b>Attended CJAB Meeting</b>
Cumberland	10/22-23, 2003	Laura Patterson	No
Centre	11/12-14, 2003	Gene Lauri	No
Lycoming	11/17-18, 2003	Pete Purcaro	Yes
Berks	12/3-4, 2003	Dale Derr	Yes
Pike	12/9-10, 2003	Brian Steuhl	Yes
Franklin	1/15-16, 2004	Alecha Sanbower, Pamela Bender	No
Chester	1/22-23	Mike Welsh	No

After each visit, a site visit report was prepared. These reports are the primary basis for this final report to PCCD. In addition to relying on site visit reports, the NCSC incorporated ideas from the Advisory Board that is composed of members knowledgeable about CJABs. The NCSC, as part of the evaluation, conducted a survey of CJAB members and performed a literature search. These were submitted as separate products but, where appropriate, information from these products is used in this report.

It should be noted that the reports reflect the situation at the time of the site visit. The individual site reports are included in the material submitted to PCCD as background. It should be further noted that the scope and depth of the material provided to NCSC varied significantly. This is not an indication of lack of cooperation, which was very good. For the most part, the variations were attributable to the extent to which the CJAB documented its activities.

The number of interviews in each county varied. Generally, the interviews were with individuals, but in some counties, notably Berks County, two or more persons were present. The number of persons interviewed ranged from six in Pike and Lycoming counties to over 20 in Berks County where there were group interviews. In both Pike and Lycoming counties, the NCSC attended CJAB meetings and met with members who provided additional insights in addition to the scheduled interviews. The key element from the NCSC perspective was to reach as broad a cross-representation of the CJAB as possible and to meet with major figures on the CJAB. The scope and depth of the interviews provided an excellent overview. Table 3 shows the distribution of interviews.

**Table 3: Interview Distribution by County**

	Berks	Centre	Chester	Cumber- land	Franklin	Lycoming	Pike
President Judge		1	1			1	1
Other Judge	2				1		
District Justice	1	1					
Court Admin.	2		1			1	1
Adult Prob.	3	1		1	1		1
Juvenile Prob.	1	a.	1				
Pretrial Serv.	1	1	1				
Commissioners	1	1		1	1	1	
Commiss. Staff	1	1		1	1		
County Tech.	4		1			1	
CJAB Staff	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
District Att.	1	1(phone)		1	1	1	
Public Def.	1		1 (top ass't)	1	1		
Sheriff					1		1
Clerk	1			1			
Warden	1	1		1	1		
Local Police	3	1					1
MH/AR		2	1	1	1		
CYS			b.				
Municip. Gov.		1			1		
EMS		1					
Other	1						
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

- a. Adult and juvenile under one chief who spoke for both.  
 b. Children and youth services under director of mental health who was interviewed.

The site visit data were grouped within the seven categories around which this report is organized.

- Overview
- Origins and Development
- Leadership, Facilitation, and Staffing
- Membership and Communications
- Role and Process
- Issues and Initiatives
- Success

Recommendations are made throughout the report. Some pertain to policy at the state level but most take the form of suggestions for new and incipient CJABs.

## **A. Overview**

The evaluation of criminal justice advisory boards (CJABs) in seven counties indicates an overwhelming consensus that these boards represent an important step forward for the criminal justice system. The reasons for this support are numerous and quite similar from county to county. The boards fill an important need in providing a coordinated high-level approach to criminal justice problems that are systemic and in providing a means to transcend departmental and cultural divisions in the pursuit of an improved system. The boards enhance communication, collaboration, and understanding and are moving from experimental to institutional status. The value of CJABs is captured in free-form comments made by respondents to an electronic survey conducted by the NCSC:

Great forum for exchange of ideas and has opened avenues of communication for departments not having frequent contact.

It brings together everyone who is needed to make changes and improvements in our criminal justice system.

Stronger focus on major priorities. Less emphasis on departmental silos.

The group is open to innovations and new challenges as they arise. It is proactive and all members are treated as equals.

Improvement of relations with others on the board.

CJAB has brought together many different components of the criminal justice system, so information and understanding are shared.

Because CJABs are, with a few notable exceptions, a relatively new phenomenon, they are still evolving. This growth and development is shaped by local predilections, occurs at varying rates of speed, and is crowned with varying degrees of success in effecting systemic change. There is clearly no CJAB mold, but these boards can and do learn from one another. The evaluation provides in a structured way the experiences of the seven counties and the lessons of this experience.

## B. CJAB Origins and Development

### 1. Foundational reasons

The reason for starting a CJAB is important because it has an effect on the path of the CJAB. Unlike similar boards in other states, those in Pennsylvania are not creatures of ordinance or statute. They derive their authority from the participation of key governmental figures and the approval of the commissioners.

**Table 4: CJAB Foundational Reasons**

County	Reason
Berks	The CJAB emanated from a conference in Tampa facilitated by the Center for Effective Studies and attended by top officials of four Pennsylvania counties (the Delaware County CJAB also emanated from this conference). The officials from Berks County were the members of the Intermediate Punishment Board. The Berks County officials saw the benefits of a broader policy board and created it.
Centre	The CJAB grew out of the experience of the Intermediate Punishment Board. The experience was positive and led to the idea of a broader group of key officials.
Chester	The CJAB grew out of a smaller board formed to maximize J-NET use. The President Judge liked the idea of a larger board where key officials could meet to discuss issues of common concern, and the CJAB took root.
Cumberland	The origin of this CJAB (called a policy team) goes back to 1989 and was initiated by the Drug and Alcohol director to discuss the issue of jail overcrowding.
Franklin	The idea of a CJAB grew out of a site visit to Delaware County on another matter and exposure to the CJAB achievements in that county. Judge Richard Walsh and top officials perceived the advantages of a broad-based policy group that would place top officials in the same room and enhance communication. Criminal Justice Associates played a large role in the formation of the CJAB organization and procedure.
Lycoming	The CJAB came into being because of J-NET and was first and foremost a J-NET policy board.
Pike	A commissioner volunteered the county as a second-tier J-NET county, but the county did not have the resources or will to follow through. Probation stepped in to create a small J-NET policy board and used this as a springboard to obtain a PCCD grant for a CJAB coordinator and to set up a broad-based board. The focus is still on J-NET and technology.

Three CJABs arose from J-NET considerations. Cumberland County's CJAB grew out of a response to a specific issue and remains very issue-oriented. Franklin County was impressed with the Delaware County model and moved toward creation of a CJAB. In Centre

County and Berks County, the CJAB grew out of an Intermediate Punishment (IP) Board, and in the case of Berks County was also inspired by a conference.

J-NET driven CJABs start with a different and narrower focus than the others. It remains to be seen how they will make a transition to a more programmatic role. The J-NET policy role of CJABs is minimal and does not occupy much time other than hearing reports from the technical committees. The J-NET role is a formal necessity that, standing alone, does not provide an active organizing principle for a new CJAB and may not coincide with any local commitment to the concept. Chester County, though constituted with a J-NET focus, has moved quickly to key issues.

The more mature CJABs in the survey (Berks County and Cumberland County) started with very practical purposes and focused on specific system improvements. In Cumberland County, the issue was how to address jail overcrowding, in particular instituting an “earned time” sentence.<sup>1</sup> In Berks County, the emphasis was on information technology, mainly integration of criminal justice information systems. These CJABs started with an issue to solve and shaped the CJAB over time according to actual experience. New CJABs, though not lacking in statements of purpose, tend to shape themselves according to existing models and then go in search of issues to address. There is sometimes a gap between aspiration and achievement that has been unsettling for some CJABs.

### ***Recommendations***

***It would be counter-productive for PCCD to mandate CJABs.  
There has to be some local leadership commitment for a CJAB to  
function successfully.***

***A CJAB should be committed to a broader role in improving the  
criminal justice system than simply serving as a J-NET policy board.***

## **2. Stages of development**

CJABs develop over time and go through stages. Berks County and Cumberland County have mature CJABs, dating from 1994 and 1989, respectively. Pike is in an early formative stage. The other four CJABs are attempting with varying degrees of success to move from a procedural, informative mode to a more programmatic issue-oriented role.

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, Cumberland County had a relatively new prison but was concerned that it would quickly reach its maximum capacity.

**Table 5: CJABs by Stage of Development**

Mature		Interim		Startup	
Cumberland	1989	Centre	1999	Pike	2002
Berks	1994	Franklin	2000		
		Lycoming	2000		
		Chester	2001		

It is apparent that CJABs develop at different paces but have some common experiences. There is an initial euphoria because there is an almost unanimous perception that having key decision makers in the same room exchanging ideas and information and discussing issues is a great step forward. There is an initial period of organization, establishing procedures, and trying to establish an identity and common purpose. In the early stages, there is a tendency to have meetings that are oriented toward information exchange, learning the system, getting comfortable, settling organizational and procedural details, and settling on issues to address. The transition to a problem-solving mode may be slow, and some CJABs have used retreats to assist in becoming more issue-oriented. If the transition is delayed, there is a risk of losing the interest of key decision-makers who are interested in practical solutions.

After the initial formative period, CJABs experience some malaise if they cannot point to a shared substantive achievement that validates the importance of the board. Unlike the Cumberland County CJAB that even predated intermediate punishment, most CJABs start in the midst of many ongoing programs, such as prison construction. CJABs may make a contribution in developing support for the prison and assisting in space needs requirements, but prison construction cannot be a “win” for a CJAB because they are not responsible for it. Sometimes, CJABs attempt a quick win by tying into programs that are more properly CJAB issues, such as central booking or central processing. Riding “piggy back” on a program that is off the ground may satisfy the need for a tangible achievement, provided the CJAB enters the picture early enough to shape the program. In two counties that were visited, the initiatives in these areas ran into difficulties, causing considerable disappointment.

The mature CJABs report ebbs and flows. Typically, there is a period of intensive satisfying activity followed by a lull. Cumberland County does not hold meetings as frequently if there is a lull. In Berks County, which boasts a number of practical achievements, there is a pervasive feeling that the board is belaboring the same old issues and needs a jump start.

Criminal Justice Associates will assist the board in reexamining itself. There is a rhythm to the life of a CJAB that is unique to each county and will be uneven.

### ***Recommendations***

***PCCD should distinguish among CJABs based on their stage of development and not treat them generically.***

***CJABs should set realistic goals and not overreach. System impact is not likely to be achieved over the short term, but a firm foundation and collaborative working relationships lay the basis for such impact.***

***The “quick win” is important but need not necessarily be a major undertaking built around PCCD grants. CJABs should identify systemic problems that are amenable to remedial action by changes in process that do not require great resources.***

***CJABs should be self-critical and be aware that they occasionally need to rejuvenate the board or adapt to changing demands of the system.***

### **3. Realistic sense of identity**

CJABs flounder if they do not have a clear idea of their role in relation to county government, state funding agencies, their membership agencies, and the criminal justice system. The fundamental question to ask is “Who are we advising?” Mainly, CJABs are advisory to governmental bodies that have decision-making authority, primarily the commissioners, but also the Board of Judges. CJAB proposals to the decision-making entities often take the form of a recommended system improvement with funding strategy included. Although CJABs may serve as policy boards for Intermediate Punishment and are the constituted policy board for J-NET, their main purpose is to propose policy rather than to make it.

Even in the areas where CJABs have a policy role, it is necessary to be clear about what this responsibility means and how it will be discharged. Some CJABs set themselves the goal of being a policy clearinghouse, but it is hard to determine exactly what this means. CJABs serve as J-NET policy board, but it was hard to find an example of a CJAB policy role, other than to occasionally interpret state J-NET policy on access. In only one county was there an example of a J-NET policy decision that was formally promulgated. Most persons interviewed could not explain the policy role.

Some CJABs serve as IP policy boards, but annual IP updates seem to emanate from staff without much scrutiny at the board level. In one county several members wanted the CJAB to

have an IP policy role because they felt that the Prison Board approved IP plans too casually. Although some CJABs have brought new programs under the IP umbrella, as in Cumberland County, it was hard to ascertain the IP policy role of a CJAB.

CJABs have been promoted by PCCD as a means to improve criminal justice systems by improved coordination and communication and also as a means to develop a coherent funding strategy, but CJABs do not deal with most grant programs, particularly those that are recurring grants for a particular department (e.g., probation grants-in-aid), rather than systemic. Systemic grants are presumably those that transcend a department and require CJAB action, but it is not always clear when a grant is systemic in nature or who makes this determination.

A CJAB has to have a systemic overview, but it is not well constituted to do strategic planning for the criminal justice system as it has no legal authority. Thus far, CJABs have not elected to engage in strategic planning of a formal nature, but some have gone through an issue identification and prioritization process, typically in a retreat setting.

The key factor in establishing a sense of purpose and sense of identity is commitment to issue resolution. The successful CJABs are those that engage top officials at a practical level. Having top officials in the same room does not suffice if the CJAB does not provide them the opportunity to devise action solutions to common problems. Grant coordination is a corollary of this main purpose, not an end in itself. Grants are sought only if they support solution of a systemic problem.

### ***Recommendations***

***CJABs, in addition to defining a mission, should think through where and how they fit into the system. This includes how they will deal with the county on proposals, particularly those involving match for a grant. It further encompasses their role in grant coordination and what constitutes a systemic grant. Finally, the CJAB has to think about the issue of scope. Will it attempt to do system analysis and strategize or focus on issues immediately at hand? Realistically, the latter best accords with the nature of a CJAB, at least in its early stages, and is consistent with CJAB experience to date. This practical issue-solving stance does not preclude development of system process charts, action plans for specific improvements, and keeping track of departmental plans that affect the system.***

***The policy role of CJABs in J-NET and possibly Intermediate Punishment should be defined. Exactly what is policy? How is it made? How is it documented and promulgated?***

#### **4. Building for success**

Criminal Justice Associates, through experience with CJABs and conducting focus groups, has identified six elements of success that provide guidance to CJABs, particularly those in a formative stage.

**Identify a champion:** Secure the active participation and advocacy of a recognized leader in the community.

**Take action:** Solve problems in an action-oriented way to keep CJAB members motivated.

**Assess performance:** Review goals and objectives, and assess performance to assure the CJAB does what it's supposed to do.

**Define a purpose:** Define the CJAB's mission so that it is acceptable to the criminal justice system and the larger community it serves.

**Involve the right people:** Recruit decision-makers in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, and key criminal justice, human service, public safety, and MIS agencies.

**Provide support:** Provide staff and technological support to arrange meetings and to collect data needed for informed decision-making.

#### ***Recommendations***

***CJABs should employ the tested guidelines that have emerged from CJAB experience to date.***

### **C. Leadership, Staffing, and Facilitation**

#### **1. Leadership**

Leadership cannot be prescribed nor is it necessarily associated with the position of chair, although this has often been the case. Because CJABs bring together important officials with major responsibilities in their own domain, leadership may spring from various sources, depending on the issue. Most of the actual work of CJABs occurs in committees, and it is there that leadership often emerges.

There is a presumption in Pennsylvania that the President Judge will chair the CJAB and that the commissioners will be represented, perhaps in a deputy chair position. The Board of Judges and the Board of Commissioners are perceived to represent the local power structure and

constitute the core of the CJAB.<sup>2</sup> This paradigm does not apply in all counties with CJABs. Moreover, the frequent turnover in commissioners frequently changes the dynamics of a CJAB. This was very evident because the site visits occurred close to an election period.

The leadership models in the seven counties visited are similar in that judges in five counties tend to have a titular leadership role, but there were many variations. In only one county could it be said that the CJAB was led by the county commission, more specifically by employees that worked closely with the commissioners. This situation arose from lack of judicial interest in the CJAB more than anything else.

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<sup>2</sup> The Pennsylvania court system is unified under the Supreme Court and will eventually be state funded. It is technically the third branch of state government, but it is still considered the third branch of local government. This is an anomaly that will become more apparent as the percentage of state funding increases.

**Table 6: CJAB Leadership Models**

County	Leadership Models
Berks	One judge, not currently the President Judge, had chaired the CJAB since 1994 and clearly had a leadership role. Other judges are involved in the CJAB, so there is a strong judicial presence. The county has been blessed with department heads and elected officials who have provided leadership on specific issues. The CJAB coordinator is the trial court administrator who is relatively new and plays a largely logistical role, in part because programmatic activity is so diffused. The commissioners have played a very minor role.
Centre	The President Judge chaired the CJAB from the outset and was a central figure. There was a relatively active commissioner who was co-chair. The CJAB has started to develop a more diffused leadership model. The county criminal justice planning office, the head of which is the CJAB coordinator, plays a very strong role in this CJAB and is definitely part of the leadership team. Next to Cumberland County, the Centre County CJAB has the most engagement from the county government.
Chester	The President Judge is a strong leadership figure, but the District Attorney has played a very strong role in this county. The CJAB coordinator, whose job has outgrown the original limited description, is located in the DA's office and has obligations to him. Other CJAB members are starting to exercise leadership roles.
Cumberland	The judiciary has not played an active role in the CJAB. Neither the President Judge nor the court administrator attend meetings and are briefed by the CJAB coordinator. There is no chair. The facilitator of the meetings at the time of the visit was the county administrator, who was instrumental in starting a policy board in 1989 when he directed D&A. The CJAB coordinator, a county employee, sometimes facilitates the meetings and plays a very strong role. Leadership from various members has been provided on key issues, just as in Berks County, but the staff has an unusually strong role. There has been an active commissioner presence. This is a CJAB with a lot of leadership from county administrative offices.
Franklin	A judge other than the President Judge has chaired the CJAB from the beginning and does have a strong leadership role. The staff roles are not as strong as they are in Cumberland and Centre Counties, although the program planner is a county employee. There are strong personalities on the CJAB and no dearth of leadership on specific issues. County government is well represented.
Lycoming	The President Judge has chaired this CJAB but sees this more as a facilitator role than a leadership role. The PJ does not feel that the chair need be a judge. A commissioner has played a very active role and is vice-chair. The CJAB coordinator is in the office of trial court administration and spends 10-15 percent of his time on CJAB, but is nonetheless a central figure. The District Attorney has played an active leadership role.
Pike	This CJAB is totally unique. The staff runs it. The CJAB coordinator, a probation officer, is the chair. The commissioners and other elected officials play a passive role, but it appeared the new PJ might assume a more active role. Basically, leadership is centered in the probation department.

**Role of Judges.** In general, a judge, not necessarily the president judge, plays a lead role in CJABs, but they vary in their view of their role, some actually lending a lot of direction and purpose to the CJABs, others simply presiding as chair and keeping meetings on course. Some judges do not feel that the chair needs to be a judge. There are situations when a President Judge has a conflict between his systemic role as CJAB chair and his role as the superintending authority for the judicial branch. This is most likely to occur with respect to the actions of district justices, and, in fact, did occur in one county where the District Attorney expressed

strong feelings about central preliminary hearing schedules with some police support and saw it as an issue for CJAB. The President Judge preferred not to make it a CJAB issue.

**Role of Commissioners.** Some CJABs include all commissioners as members, but typically, one commissioner attends and represents the board. The role of commissioners on CJABs is a bit ambiguous. The CJAB is an advisory board that presumably is advising the commissioners, so that the role of a commissioner on CJAB often becomes that of giving a general indication of how the commission will react. No one wants a situation where a CJAB initiative is “dead on arrival.” However, some commissioners are reluctant to speak for their fellow commissioners and are very circumspect, fearing a backlash if the CJAB is wrongly advised and a CJAB proposal is rejected. This occurred in one county at about the time of the site visit. The commissioner/vice chair on the CJAB indicated probable approval of a central booking system, but the full board, including the vice-chair, held up approval much to the chagrin of board members who had worked hard to develop the approval and prepare a PCCD grant.

Commissioners cannot really play a leadership role, although they may occasionally chair a meeting. The role of the commissioners is strengthened if the CJAB coordinator is part of county administrative structure and a generator of information and ideas. Commissioners act as sounding boards and are often interested in learning about the issues being discussed by leaders of the criminal justice community to see what may come before the commissioners. They may also seek CJAB support for politically sensitive undertakings like prison construction. Commissioners represent an essential presence and may contribute important perspectives, but they are obviously constrained in what they can do without compromising their role as ultimate decision-maker.

**Role of Staff.** Leadership is more than a formal structure. There is such a thing as “leading from behind.” There is no question that CJAB coordinators are the source of many initiatives, particularly those that are grant-related. They have a detailed knowledge and an overview. All have influence and are important attendees at any meeting. In Pike County, the CJAB coordinator does not lead from behind. He is designated as the leader (this is expected to be temporary). The CJAB coordinators in Cumberland County and Centre County have major roles. Given the nature of CJABs, busy officials meeting at wide intervals, the staff will

necessarily be a factor in leadership decisions. Some staff will chair important committees, as for example, in Chester County.

**Diffused Leadership.** Leadership on specific issues comes from many sources and is exercised in committee leadership and sometimes in building a consensus. Committee heads are typically volunteers who seek responsibility and may be the originator of the initiative assigned to the committee. It was clear at the Berks County CJAB meeting that members freely assume responsibility and are accustomed to diffused leadership. In Cumberland County, the public defender and district attorney jointly led an effort to develop a program for handling offenders with mental health problems, an unusual tandem but very effective. Wardens often take the lead role on prison problems and have been active advocates on mental health initiatives. In the newer CJABs, this type of leadership is evolving. An interesting phenomenon is that judges other than the chair often get involved, sometimes quite heavily, as for example, in court automation or treatment courts. Some judges chair committees.

In short, leadership models cannot be discerned from diagrams. Leadership emerges as issues surface. The chair may be the key leader, but not necessarily so.

**Continuity.** A major factor in leadership is the continuity of membership of major officials. It is noteworthy that the core of officials who founded the Berks County CJAB is still active. Cumberland County has also had good fortune in membership stability. The general view is that the well-established CJABs can withstand changes in leadership, but in any event, this factor is not evident in a leadership model.

### ***Recommendations***

***Judges need not be the chair of a CJAB. Commissioners need not be the vice-chair. This alignment is common and quite fine but need not be taken as a given.***

***A distinction should be made between leadership that focuses on the CJAB as a whole, ensuring its sense of direction and adherence to priorities, and the leadership that is required on specific issues. The former type of leadership could be provided by an executive committee. Both types of leadership are necessary for success and should be fostered, mainly by involving those who are capable and desirous of leading.***

***Leadership in a CJAB is unique because there are so many major officials involved and because leadership is often exhibited at the committee level, but CJABs can benefit from materials and training courses that deal specifically with the exercise of leadership in a broadly***

***based group of high-ranking officials that meets infrequently and operates through committees. Staff roles tend to become quasi-leadership roles, a fact that should be considered in any training.***

## **2. Staff Support**

CJAB members are busy officials who cannot cope with the detailed logistics associated with CJAB operation. Moreover, CJABs and their committees do not meet frequently. Strong staff support is therefore essential. Recognizing this need, the PCCD has, in some counties, funded the position of a CJAB coordinator. In the counties surveyed, coordinators made an important contribution to the functionality of the CJAB and were considered a crucial component of the CJAB. Most are CJAB members.

The most common term to designate the principal CJAB staff position is now “coordinator,” but in some counties the operative word was “facilitator,” at least in the early stages of the CJAB. The staff role has many other facets, not all of them present in each county:

- **Logistics:** The coordinator sets up meetings, prepares the agenda in conjunction with leadership, and disseminates materials for meetings, reserves meeting places, and communicates meeting details.
- **Recorder in chief:** Usually, the coordinator is responsible for taking and disseminating minutes, although the coordinator may be able to delegate this task to an administrative aide.
- **Collector of information:** The coordinator serves as “information central” dispensing information on grant opportunities and keeping the CJAB updated on occurrences in the system. The coordinator is expected to have an overview of the system and J-NET.
- **Interim communicator:** The coordinator is responsible for CJAB-related communication between meetings. This may go beyond simple conveyance of information to include consensus building.
- **Chair:** A coordinator may occasionally chair a meeting. In one of the counties in the survey, the coordinator is the chair.
- **Grant development:** A coordinator may write concept papers or grant applications and serve as the grant manager. CJAB coordinators in the county administrative structure may have a general grant role for the county.
- **Staff or chair committees:** Coordinators may head committees or serve on them. Commonly, they serve as staff for committees.
- **Foundational assistance:** In a new CJAB, the coordinator may have a major role in the organization and procedures of the CJAB.

- **CJAB advocate:** Coordinators have a special role in promoting CJAB, making it known, keeping members engaged, and maintaining momentum.

As stated earlier, most coordinators have great influence within a CJAB. They are part of the leadership structure and work closely with the chair. It is clear from the site visits that coordinators in some counties are viewed as key figures with a role that transcends the normal staff role.

The coordinator role varies in scope. In Berks County and Lycoming County, the coordinators do not allocate much time to CJAB, probably 15% or less. Where the coordinator has a full-time managerial position, as in Lycoming County and Berks County, the coordinator cannot realistically devote a lot of time to CJAB. In Lycoming County, in its early stages of development, the time devoted by the coordinator suffices for the time being. In Berks County, with a tradition of diffused responsibility, there may not be a need for a coordinator to allocate much time.

PCCD has not funded the coordinator positions in Berks County and Lycoming County but has funded CJAB coordination in Centre, Chester, Franklin, and Pike Counties. The coordinator in Cumberland County is funded through the IP grant.

Three coordinators are located in the judicial branch. The Berks County coordinator is the Trial Court Administrator and the Lycoming coordinator is the Director of Court Services. The Pike County coordinator, a probation officer, is fully committed to CJAB and was hired specifically for that purpose.

In Centre, Cumberland, and Franklin Counties, the coordinator is located in the county administrative offices. There are advantages to having the coordinator in the county offices as the coordinator has an overview of grants and knows county politics in fiscal matters. Moreover, the coordinator can serve as a bridge between the commissioners and the criminal justice system, in particular the judges. In Cumberland County, the coordinator is called the “grant administrator.” The Centre County coordinator has a similar central role. The fact is that a well-established coordinator’s advice on grant opportunities carries a lot of weight and may determine how the CJAB reacts. Moreover, a coordinator makes a judgment on whether a grant program is departmental or systemic and thus a CJAB concern. Most criminal justice grants are still considered departmental, e.g., victim-witness, school-based juvenile probation, intensive adult probation supervision, and state grants for probation.

Pennsylvania counties are heavily dependent on state and federal grants. In some counties in the survey, much less than 20% of the budget is financed from the county general fund. Relatively small counties feel the need for a grant administrator, even though they find it hard to find money for a salary. It is conceivable that the CJAB coordinator in one of the smaller counties could serve also as county grant manager.

Each county in the survey has a different staff support configuration:

**Table 7: CJAB Staff Support Configuration**

Berks	The coordinator allocates part of his time to CJAB and is assisted by judicial secretaries. There are no minutes and no central grant responsibility.
Centre	There is a three-person criminal justice planning staff in the county administrative offices. The office head has IP responsibility and commits most of his time to prison construction. PCCD funded the other two positions in the office, which are now county-funded. One position is that of planner who is active in J-NET and technology and sits on the board. There is an administrative assistant who handles minutes and much of the paper work. This is the most fully staffed CJAB support office in the seven counties.
Chester	The coordinator was funded to preside over the development of the criminal justice information network, but as the CJAB role has expanded so has the coordinator role. The position is in the office of the District Attorney and is PCCD-funded.
Cumberland	The coordinator has been with the CJAB for several years and is the grant expert for the county. She occasionally facilitates CJAB meetings, assists in building consensus, determines the agenda, and makes judgments on what is systemic and what is not. The county administrator, a foundational figure in the CJAB, still facilitates meetings and is, in a sense, a support person. This county has the strongest county administrative presence on the CJAB. The staff clearly has a strong leadership role.
Franklin	There are two staff support persons, a program planner with grant responsibility and an administrative aide who is funded from a PCCD grant. Both are half time. The planner also supports mental health. They are located in the county administrative offices and work closely with the chair.
Lycoming	The Director of Court Services allocates 15% of his time to CJAB and has not assumed a major grant role. The CJAB does not meet frequently, and he is the linchpin that holds things together. He is clearly looked to as the fount of knowledge.
Pike	The coordinator is PCCD-funded and has been given a unique role. He had the prime responsibility for establishing the organization and procedures of the CJAB and is the chair. The county is not advanced technologically, so he spends a large portion of time in trying to upgrade user capability and the technical level of the county justice system. The head of adult probation who sought the CJAB coordinator grant remains active in a co-chair role.

### **Recommendations**

***It is evident that a CJAB requires staff support to function and that the principal staff person should be a professional with considerable versatility and knowledge of the system. PCCD funding is available for staff.***

***Even in a relatively small county, the level of support for a CJAB could be one FTE, not necessarily provided by one person. A lot depends on the extent to which the person is engaged in writing grants. If grant writing is handled by departments that volunteer to assume***

***responsibility for a particular grant, the support function is shared. The use of volunteers is most likely in counties where departments have the resources to volunteer their staff; for example, the county IT department. It is least likely in counties with limited staff resources, most commonly the less populous counties. One possibility is for small counties to have a CJAB staff for two or more counties.***

***Several options for staff support suggest themselves: (1) create a fairly centralized staff support in a county planning or grant management office or (2) appoint a manager in some criminal justice agency (typically managers in the judicial branch) and rely on volunteer support for many support functions. The organizational location of the coordinator is a local choice, but it appears that there are great advantages to having the coordinator in the county administrative office with a general role in grants. This is more likely to facilitate grant coordination and build bridges between commissioners and CJABs.***

***There is an informal network of CJAB coordinators that should be strengthened. There is no standard coordinator role, but it is this group of professionals that constitute the bulwark of the CJAB movement.***

### **3. Facilitation**

Facilitators with expertise in group process have played an important role in assisting county leaders to form CJABs and to define a mission. Facilitators have also been used to help CJABs reexamine themselves after several years of operation. In both situations, it has been common to have retreats where work schedules did not impinge on the deliberative process. Most of the counties in the survey have employed facilitators for one or both of the above purposes. In two counties, the CJAB had either just completed a retreat to consider a mid-course correction or was about to embark on such a retreat.

In the case of start-up retreats, some CJABs have retained the services of the facilitator for a year or more to assist in the early formative stages. The facilitators are sometimes chosen from national consulting firms, but more commonly from Pennsylvania organizations with special knowledge of CJABs and the criminal justice system of the Commonwealth, notably Criminal Justice Associates and the Mercyhurst College Civic Institute.

Cumberland County uses a facilitator for regular meetings rather than a chair. The concept is based on the idea that CJAB meetings should be directed by a neutral rather than a

party with a stake in the system. The facilitator is not, however, an outside consultant but a county employee of high rank.

***Recommendations***

***Any CJAB wrestling with foundational and organizational issues is well advised to employ the services of a facilitator.***

***It is prudent for a CJAB to plan a retreat every 4-5 years, earlier if necessary, and to make use of a trained facilitator.***

**D. Membership and Communications**

**1. Membership**

The composition of CJABs covers a number of topics that are separately treated below:

**a. Size**

The seven CJABs in the survey ranged from 20-30 in membership. CJABs seem to grow in size as they age and take on new issues. Membership is a fluid concept. Some CJABs permit non-member observers. If judges or commissioners who are not officially members come to a meeting, they are welcome. Some chronic non-attendees are no longer considered members but appear on the list.

**Table 8: CJAB Membership by County**

	Berks	Centre	Chester	Cumberland	Franklin	Lycoming	Pike
PJ	1	1	1	1		1	1
Assoc judge	4		1		1	1	
D J	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TCA	2	1	2			1	1
APO	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dom Rel							1
JPO	1		1	1	1	1	
J. Detention		1					
Other probation	2						
PT Serv	1	1	1				
Clerk/ Protho- notary	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Sheriff	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Warden	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
DA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Comm	1	3	1	3	1	1	3
Control/ Treas		Once was		1	1		
County Admin/clerk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
County IT	3		1		1	1	1
EMS		1	1			1	1
Misc county Coordinator	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Police	4	1	1	1	1	2	3
S Police	1		1		1	1	1
Local Elected			1		2	Mayor	
Public Rep Legislator			1		4		
MH/D&A		2	1	2	1		
CYS		1		1	1		
Victim-Wit					1		
Aging Com				1			
Constable	1				1		
Other	1						
	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>

**b. System components represented**

The total number of members is less significant than the mix. There is, for example, a marked difference in the balance of court and county administration members. Berks County has strong judicial branch presence: five judges, three court administrators, four probation representatives, plus other judicial branch members. County representation is minimal, except on information technology. In Cumberland County almost the reverse is true. Franklin County has the largest percentage of county administrative officers of any CJAB, outnumbering judicial branch representatives. The salient point is that CJAB membership mix is quite varied.

There is a core of regular members--commissioners, top county administrators, judges, court administrators, district judges, adult probation chiefs, sheriffs, wardens, DAs, and public defenders. All CJABs have local police representation. Beyond this core group, there is great variety in the agencies represented. Table 9 lists some of the other agencies or officials.

**Table 9: Agencies Sometimes Represented on CJABs**

Agency Represented	CJAB
Juvenile Probation	In some counties, e.g., Pike and Centre, adult and juvenile probation are under one chief who represents both sides of probation. Juvenile probation is always represented.
Domestic Relations	In Pike County, the domestic relations chief has been added as PACSES is an accessible state database.
Juvenile Detention	In Centre, the chief of juvenile detention is a member, but is not active.
Children and Family Services	Represented in three of seven counties. They do not appear to have much of a role.
Pretrial Services	Berks, Centre, and Chester counties place the head of pretrial services on CJAB.
Clerk/Prothonotary	Where the offices are combined, the prothonotary may be a member (in Franklin County, where there is a clerk, the prothonotary is also a member). Clerks and prothonotaries seem to be fairly passive or irregular attendees.
Treasurer/Controller	A few counties have these officials as members, but they are not active.
EMS	The head of emergency communications is included in three CJABs; one heads the Technology Committee in Centre County.
County IT	Most CJABs include one or more people from county IT. Centre County outsources IT.
MH/D&A	Becoming a standard inclusion but not yet included on newer CJABs.
Victim-Witness/ Commission on Aging	These two offices are represented only in Cumberland County. The inclusion of victim-witness programs has caused controversy in counties not in the survey group.
State Legislator	Chester County includes a state legislator who is seldom able to attend.
State police	The state police are represented in 5 of 7 CJABs. The ethos of the department is to remain separate, but the state police are becoming quite involved in the Pike County central processing initiative.
Constables	Two CJABs have constable members. Constables are controversial in some counties (see the following item 3).

**c. Breadth of inclusion**

In addition to the various county and state agencies that may be represented on a CJAB (Table 9), a CJAB may also name members who do not have operational positions in county or state government such as, elected local government representatives, representatives of non-profit organizations, and public representatives.

**Local government representation:** From the outset, CJABs have been county-oriented with a membership composed primarily of county operational officials. One exception has been the inclusion of local police officers. The mayor of Williamsport is a member of the Lycoming County CJAB. Franklin County includes a borough representative and a township representative on its CJAB. In an interview, the township representative noted that local police officers speak from a departmental perspective and cannot represent local government views, particularly if they represent an association of police departments. He further observed that local governments had an interest in central booking and drug control programs among juveniles. The question of local government financial contribution could only be addressed by an elected local official, not by a police officer.

Many local governments in Pennsylvania do not have a police department, and some have departments with only a couple of policemen. Large parts of many counties are patrolled by the state police or, as in Berks County, regional police departments. If a county has a major population center with a large police department, that department automatically assumes a central role in many programs and technological development. In Centre County, Lycoming County, and Berks County chiefs of the largest departments sit on the board. In Centre County, the Chief of the State College Borough Police Department is the sole local government and police representative. In the other two counties, outlying police departments are represented. In some cases, the police representative reports back to an association on CJAB activities. Several police officers reported that the CJABs gave them an opportunity to bring issues before the judiciary, to stay informed on technology, and to learn about and participate in program initiatives affecting police departments.

In some counties, the major population center and the county government have an uneasy relationship as rival political centers. As noted previously, police officers cannot adequately represent local government views. It is noteworthy that in both Lycoming County and Berks County, newly elected mayors were invited to the CJAB meeting because city cooperation and city resources were important to a program. CJAB leaders may be concerned because a change in mayors may mean the appointment of a new chief (this occurred in Williamsport) and disruption of established working relationships.

A delicate problem for many police information systems is the role of the main police department that is often far advanced over other departments and sees no benefit from being the

hub of a countywide program. In both Williamsport and Reading, city-county differences impeded central booking.

**Public members:** Franklin County has four public members (clergy, academia, business, and general citizenry), the only CJAB of the seven to have such representation. At CJAB meetings in Franklin County, major officials explained the function of their department is to educate the public representatives. This was thought to be a digression by some members.

Berks County's CJAB has about 30 members and has grown over the years, but it remains restricted to operational officials. The leadership position is clear. The CJAB is a working group of major officials, not a town meeting. The survey of CJAB members conducted by NCSC revealed some opposition to expansion of membership, indicating agreement with the Berks County position.

CJABs generally have little problem with media presence, but reporters seldom attend, even if invited, because the CJAB does not make final decisions and may delve into complex systemic issues. Some CJABs have discussed the application of Sunshine Laws with county solicitors and announce meetings in the newspapers. Most reporters seem content to wait until a CJAB recommendation ends up on the agenda of the commissioners.

**Non-profit organizations:** There are a number of non-profit corporations with an interest in some aspect of civic improvement, among them Communities That Care, the Pennsylvania Prison Society, and the National Association for Mental Health Improvement. Such organizations are numerous in large counties like Berks. In Centre County and Berks County, non-profit corporations are designated by rule of court to provide pretrial services. Their directors are CJAB members. In Berks County, pretrial services are provided by the Berks County Prison Society (not the Pennsylvania Prison Society). In Centre County, pretrial services are provided by the Center for Alternatives in Community Justice (CACJ). Non-profits were represented on the Centre County IP Board but not originally included in CJAB. The board reexamined the issue of pretrial release and jail overcrowding, and reinvolved CAJC. Both non-profit organizations have broader missions than pretrial services and are very much part of the non-profit network. Both are acknowledged to be an asset to the system on jail overcrowding and have proven highly objective.

In Berks County, the head of the Prison Society is the official link to the county non-profit network (Community Services Network) and attends their meetings. He informs them

about CJAB and reports back their concerns. Not uncommonly, major elected officials on CJAB will accompany him, so there is a formal recognition that the CJAB regards the non-profit community as important. Because the Prison Society director has credibility with the Community Services Network, the communication and inclusion work well. In Cumberland County, which traditionally favors a relatively small CJAB, some non-profit inclusion has been obtained through committee assignments. This is most likely to occur in mental health initiatives where treatment providers are non-profits. Newer CJABs are unlikely to take on this issue initially.

One interesting example of outreach to non-profits occurred in Franklin County where the CJAB program planner assisted Waynesboro's "Communities that Care" to obtain a small grant from DH for a public safety seminar.

**Weed and Seed:** This state program targets localities, usually cities, where there is an opportunity to combat a serious crime problem and to build a preventive network to ensure that the same situation will not resurface. Weed and Seed programs were in operation in two of the counties in the survey, Reading in Berks County and Coatesville in Chester County. There has not been much formal CJAB linkage with these programs, perhaps due to their city orientation, but these programs do receive grant money and are very much in the criminal justice area.

**d. Cultural blends**

A CJAB, particularly a mature CJAB, is more than a means of bringing together the various components of the justice system and possibly some related mental health and treatment agencies. A CJAB includes a number of distinct cultures that may or may not blend well. The success of a CJAB is related to this cultural phenomenon.

There is, of course, a law enforcement culture, but this is tempered by the presence of public defenders, a distinct subculture that is very important to a balanced CJAB. There is more receptivity among wardens and many probation officers to a treatment or therapeutic culture than there is among prosecutors and law enforcement personnel. The criminal justice community is not a cultural monolith.

The emphasis of CJABs is on adult criminals. Although juvenile justice is represented on CJABs through juvenile probation representatives, the attendance and interest of juvenile representatives tends to be lower than average. Traditionally, there has been a juvenile subculture that is more interested in changing behavior than in punishment, and it remains a very

unique subculture with a self-contained structure. Children and youth services, involved in the serious problems of a dependency abuse and neglect that overlap delinquency, are even more child-oriented than juvenile probation and do not play a significant role in the CJABs in the counties that were surveyed.

Observers pointed out other distinct subcultures:

- **Fiscal/administrative:** Commissioner staff and commissioners bring a fiscal perspective that is distinctive and less issue-oriented than it is money-oriented.
- **Evaluative:** Grants generally have an evaluation component, so that a CJAB requires staff with social science research skills. The staff brings an evaluative perspective and usually does detailed planning for grant-funded programs. The level of detail and the measurables cannot really be addressed by a busy CJAB or even a committee. (Franklin County has an evaluation committee headed by a staff member). It is not uncommon for CJAB members to ask for empirical research results on a program they are considering, particularly treatment courts where the research is still not clear on the value.
- **Technical:** All CJABs are concerned with technological development. The newer CJABs almost exclusively so because they start in compliance with the requirement that there be a CJAB serving as a policy board before JNET participation is permitted. In both mature CJABs (Berks and Cumberland Counties), great emphasis was placed on building an advanced informational technology infrastructure, only possible without a strong commitment to technology on the part of county officials. A CJAB cannot realistically deal with the complexity of the fast developing web-based progress in criminal justice technology and is dependent on a technical culture. This is clear at CJAB meetings where the members are kept informed but are really seeing the tip of another culture with a different idiom and frame of reference.
- **Therapeutic:** By far the most difficult cultural adaptation occurs when a CJAB gets involved in programs that require cooperation of the mental therapeutic culture and the law enforcement culture, most commonly on the subject of handling mentally ill offenders. It can take years of mutual education simply to set the stage for a programmatic initiative and establish trust.

In several counties, the minor judiciary was referred to as a distinct subculture that had never been fully integrated into the justice system. In Chester County, the constable problem was seen as analogous, an example of do-it-yourself localism. CJABs were seen as a means of more fully integrating district judges into the justice system, as they are key to some of the CJAB programs: central booking, central processing, and central preliminary hearings. The effect of all these programs is centrality and cooperation, not parochialism. District justices, more than Common Pleas judges, are major figures in the early processing of criminal cases where the grant-funded programs are concentrated. In larger counties, there is often a trial court

administrator for the minor judiciary. In two counties, Berks and Chester, these administrators were on the CJAB, representing the importance of the minor judiciary.

District justices are normally represented on CJABs by one person who may or may not speak for the minor judiciary. District justices are elected officials with their own geographic jurisdiction and tend to be highly individualistic. There was clearly some difference in outlook between district justices in urban and rural areas, particularly on central booking and central preliminary hearings. There is some question as to whether one district justice can represent his peers.

District justices have a special authority with respect to constables who constitute a semi-anarchic element of the justice system, and may serve process or provide transport. Where they exist, they have their closest relationships to district justices who may or may not supervise them. Some CJABs include constables as members. The Chester County CJAB has a Constable Committee headed by the president judge. There are some 120 constables in the county, more than 50 of whom are active. Chester County appears to use constables for transportation and warrant service to a high degree. Many agencies are affected by the constable system, primarily district justices, but juvenile agencies also use constable transport for dependency and delinquency cases. The DA and some law enforcement agencies, including the State Police, also use constables. The constables are fee-compensated and they are entitled to county payment of fees in instances where the fee cannot be collected with the result being that the county has a very large constable budget. Although constables are bonded and have to receive PCCD training, they are not really accountable to anyone. Some district justices set and enforce their own standards for constables, but there is a general recognition that the constables constitute a weak spot in the system. The issue that drove this to the front burner in Chester County was the breakdown of Central Regional Booking (CRB) due to police discomfiture with some of the constables who were supposed to staff the CRB and a subsequent refusal of constables to provide staff support.

### ***Recommendations***

***There is a balance between inclusion and unwieldy size. Because CJABs tend to grow simply by addition of operational officials, the addition of non-operational officials, though clearly a local choice, is not the ideal way to achieve inclusion. CJAB membership for citizen***

*representatives and personnel from non-profit organizations can be achieved by means other than membership (except those non-profits that have an operational responsibility). Inclusion can be achieved by permitting attendance at meetings or, as relevant, even presentation at meetings, or committee membership. Another way to engage non-profits, who generally have a very specific interest, is to engage them in issues that pertain to their area of interest or to establish CJAB liaison with associations of non-profit groups. Outreach to major citizen organizations can be a more effective means of communication than membership for a few citizens.*

*A CJAB should not have a preponderance of members from any one part of the criminal justice system and should avoid having a lot of second line managers from a particular department. Managers at this level are particularly important in working committees, less so on policy issues.*

*Although not an immediate concern for most CJABs in their earlier years, the issues of juvenile justice should at some point be given more consideration.*

*Local elected officials should be included on CJABs, most certainly the mayor of major population centers.*

## **2. Communications**

### **a. Internal communication**

CJAB surveys have pretty consistently shown that members see improved communications as a prime benefit. The most obvious benefit is the colloquy among key decision-makers, always a major reason for CJAB creation. Such colloquies were occurring to varying degrees in each of the seven counties that were visited, marred only by the chronic absence of a few decision-makers. This type of communication goes to the heart of the CJAB movement. Without it, there is no chance of success.

CJAB members are not on a plane of equality in legal authority and political power, so there is an important secondary line of communication between high-ranking managers and elected officials. The former have an opportunity to be heard in a group setting and to get their ideas considered. Some experienced observers see top line managers as a principal beneficiary of a CJAB. This is borne out by interviews. Interviews also indicated that some members still feel a little inhibited, usually because the judge chairing the meeting seemed a little intimidating.

A number of persons who were interviewed felt that the communication among members of CJAB committees was at least as important as the communication at CJAB meetings.

Committees were less formal and more substantive, and communication was sometimes more heated. The communication on mental health committees was crucial in forging cooperative relationships between the treatment community and law enforcement. Communication was essential to mutual understanding and trust.

Committee communication is not just internal. Committees report to the CJAB and are highly influential. There is usually an ongoing communication between a CJAB and its committees.

There is a logistical form of communication, often E-mail, that keeps CJAB members informed in the periods between meetings. This is not necessarily a one-way communication from the chair or coordinator to the members. The latter may, for example, suggest agenda items. This type of interim communication keeps members informed and involved, very important if a CJAB does not meet monthly. It was clear from the site visits that CJAB members peruse the agenda in advance to see if there are items that pique their interest, compel their attendance, or require their participation.

One of the important types of internal communication is the conveyance of information on grant opportunities and programs that will attract funding. This information often emanates from the coordinator but may come from any department or division. This sharing of information is one the beneficial features of CJAB and contributes to a coherent funding strategy.

**b. External communication**

CJABS are advisory, which, by definition, suggests a channel of communication with the advisee, presumptively the commissioners, perhaps the board of judges. The fact that judges and commissioners may be present at CJAB meetings does not necessarily mean that communication is adequate. There may be a need to brief the commissioners and judges on some issues where their cooperation and full understanding is crucial. There is an absolute need to communicate in the event of absence from the CJAB meeting. Some CJAB coordinators and chairs feel it important to maintain interim communication with commissioners. In one county, where judicial participation in the CJAB was irregular, the coordinator made it a point to make periodic presentations to the board of judges on issues where they had some stake.

Some commissioners noted that communication of CJAB initiatives was not done very well, perhaps because the CJAB assumed that the commissioners were already informed because

one or more of their members attended CJAB meetings. The CJABs have to schedule time on the commissioner agenda, provide the type of materials or presentation that is expected in the county, and finally to send a representative who is able to communicate.

External communications are necessary with the media, the public, nonprofits with a stake in the justice system, and governmental officials, both county and municipal, who are not in the criminal justice system. Some description of these communications is given in preceding sections, but the salient point is that CJABs, by and large, have not developed a successful outreach that make the CJAB activities known. Several new CJAB members stated in interviews that they were not even aware of the CJAB until invited to be a member. It appears from interviews that some CJAB members feel the value of a CJAB lies in the discussions among system leaders and do not see much need for outreach beyond the membership.

### ***Recommendations***

***CJABs should examine the internal lines of communication and ensure that there is no obstacle to free exchange of ideas and opinions, particularly for those members who do not enjoy elected status. The chair has a particular responsibility to create an atmosphere of openness and to ensure that the coordinator keeps up a flow of information between CJAB meetings and entertains agenda suggestions from members.***

***CJABs should not assume that the presence of a commissioner at CJAB meetings lessens the need for full explication of an initiative in the form that is required in that county, in particular fiscal implications.***

***In many counties it would be advisable for the chair or coordinator to provide interim briefings for commissioners, and if necessary, the judges.***

***CJABs should determine at the outset how they will communicate their work and their goals more broadly, specifically to county and municipal officials who are outside the criminal justice loop, to nonprofits with a stake in the system, and to the general public. Because a CJAB aims to have an impact on the system that will have general benefits to the community, there should be, at some point, mechanisms that provide information and liaison to the named groups, possibly dialogue.***

## **E. Role and Process**

### **1. Role**

The roles of CJABs evolve as they age. The mature CJABs probably represent the model toward which most CJABs will gravitate. This is already happening with the newer CJABs in the survey. Among the roles that CJABs are playing or may shortly play are:

- Policy advisor to the commissioners on criminal justice issues
- Policy board for J-NET and, in some counties, IP programs
- System forum for issues that transcend any one department or division
- Information central on new developments in the system
- Catalyst and champion for initiating new programs
- Ongoing oversight of criminal justice system
- Linkage with policymaking bodies in the criminal justice system (e.g., juvenile justice system) and with the mental health community
- Development and coordination of grants to finance new programs

The last role pertaining to grants has great importance. CJABs generate grant applications and concept papers and require staff resources, either its own staff or staff of departments that volunteer services. CJABs also have a role in coordinating a coherent grant approach in the criminal justice area, an obligation that is not clearly defined. When do grants become a CJAB concern? In general, CJABs get involved with grants when: (1) the CJAB is the beneficiary of the grant, e.g., a staff support grant; (2) a CJAB committee proposes or even drafts a funding request in connection with a program; or (3) the executive committee decides to submit a concept paper to PCCD. There do not seem to be any norms or procedures for determining CJAB involvement in grants, what form this involvement should take, and how to present recommendations to the commissioners. Nor are there clear guides on what is systemic and what remains departmental. This is a role in need of clarity.

#### ***Recommendations***

***Any CJAB should be aware of its potential and actual role in the county. The above list of roles is not exclusive but should serve as a list against which a CJAB can assess the role it is playing or aspires to play. Most important, a CJAB should spell out its role in the grant process.***

***It is advisable that all criminal justice grants be brought before the CJAB, perhaps excepting recurring annual grants, so the CJAB can maintain an overview and identify those grants that have systemic***

***implications. The CJAB could endorse grants that are strictly departmental.***

***A CJAB should consider and discuss grants that open new areas and concern several agencies and not be a rubber stamp. This establishes credibility with the commissioners. Although CJAB approval does not necessarily mean that commissioners will go along, the chances are better if there has been a serious review and attempt to achieve user consensus on the value of the undertaking.***

## **2. CJAB plenary session process**

As one might expect in the conduct of a meeting of government officials, there are similarities in process among the seven CJABs. The main difference is that the two mature CJABs tend to be more informal than the other five. The Berks County CJAB, as a matter of policy, does not use minutes to record their meetings, the idea being that they do not want to impede open discussion. They do not have bylaws but have very organized meetings. Cumberland County uses a facilitator instead of a chair. A strong attempt is made to maximize participation both through the agenda and the meeting itself. The other CJABs are a bit more formal with respect to bylaws, mission statements, and rules of order. Even they vary. Some start with minutes of the last meeting, use rules of order and formal motions; and are procedurally oriented, but others are in practice pretty informal.

CJAB bylaws are becoming pretty standardized as there are models available. The exercise of designing a mission statement and an organizational scheme is very helpful in the creative stage of a CJAB, but their relevance fades in the light of actual practice. Each CJAB develops a modus operandi. It appears that the style of the chair influences the way the CJAB operates.

The three meetings attended by NCSC staff (Berks, Lycoming, and Pike counties) reflected the local ethos. In Berks County, the meeting covered a lot of systemic issues and showed involvement of a number of members. The meeting in Lycoming County was conducted formally and was largely informational. Few issues were on the table. In Pike County, the meeting was a high-tech presentation by the CJAB coordinator, primarily a review of the steps being taken to upgrade technology and train users. There was no audience participation. The difference among the meetings was the degree of member involvement and the emphasis on non-

technological issues. It was not surprising that the two new CJABs had not yet the breadth of programmatic initiatives that characterize Berks County.

CJABs operate by consensus. If a major official, the district attorney for example, is opposed to a program, an attempt is made to win support, often outside of meetings. In Berks County, where the district attorney had some objections to central booking, the sheriff who was leading the central booking effort, held up a grant application until the district attorney was satisfied.

The fact the CJABs proceed by consensus has not precluded voting. More often than not, voting takes the form of a show of hands to ascertain how members feel on a subject, not an “up and down” vote. The more formal CJABs may vote on procedural matters, but no one has any illusions about where the power lies in CJAB. Elected officials are first among equals and occasionally like to have this specified in bylaws where “voting members” are listed. Both Franklin County and Cumberland County CJABs have such clauses although it appears superfluous in practice as consensus is the norm. One district attorney stated that he did not like the idea of the head of the drug and alcohol unit having an equal voice with him. The “voting member” provisions do not change anything. They are simply a reminder that some CJAB members have power and authority that distinguishes them from other members.

The seven CJABs vary in frequency of meetings. Some CJABs change the frequency of meetings based on the perceived need to meet.

**Table 10: CJAB Meeting Frequency**

<b>County</b>	<b>Meeting Frequency</b>
Berks	Meets monthly except two vacation months
Centre	Meets monthly except two vacation months
Chester	Met monthly, changed to bi-monthly
Cumberland	Met monthly, changed to bi-monthly
Franklin	Meets monthly except two vacation months
Lycoming	Quarterly
Pike	Quarterly. This schedule was at the request of the commissioners, who could not commit to attend more frequent meetings.

Quarterly meetings would appear too infrequent to maintain interest, but both Lycoming and Pike counties have limited programmatic initiatives beyond technological development. Much of their progress in information technology occurs at the staff and consultant level.

Attendance is a key indicator of interest, but it was hard to obtain much more than anecdotal evidence on the subject. In Franklin County, Shippensburg University did an evaluation of attendance and confirmed the anecdotal evidence. There are a number of chronic absentees who may or may not send a deputy. Row officers are not zealous attendees, nor are members from the juvenile justice group. Commissioners tend to be represented, but perhaps not as vocally as some would hope. Absenteeism is noticed, even if not formally recorded, but some absences are glaring – two counties with district attorneys who are publicly boycotting the CJAB and the non-involvement of the judiciary in one county. Interviews revealed some pattern of non-attendance in every county, sometimes among major elected officials, but overall attendance has been generally good; obtaining a quorum has not been a problem. Bylaws of some newer CJABs have provisions that impose attendance requirements on members, but these are not, as a practical matter, enforceable.

Agendas are similar, typically prepared by the CJAB coordinator in conjunction with the chair. Usually, members have a right to suggest agenda items. Occasionally, a guest presenter is placed on the agenda. The Centre County CJAB heard a presentation from Centre Peace, a non-profit organization that works with recently released prisoners to ease their way back into society. Centre County also has a popular round table that permits each member to give a quick update on their part of the system. Some of the CJAB agendas reflect a “show and tell” formula, pretty much committee reports and information updates. Some CJAB coordinators feel that it is preferable for committees to provide a brief written report to reduce presentation time and to make sure that members clearly understand the details. This permits more time for live issues and cuts down on repetitive and boring committee reports. Since there is no chair in Cumberland County, the CJAB coordinator has wide latitude in drafting the agenda. Participant interest is a primary consideration.

A key agenda item is the new business segment where issues are freely raised. A new issue may be referred to a committee, but might be resolved by the CJAB if analysis is not required. A number of persons commented that CJAB meetings too often rehashed old items and did not allow enough time for new business and discussion. To an outsider, the Berks County agenda for December seemed very substantive, a series of issues on which the CJAB was working. But apparently the agenda items had remained essentially the same for months and were beginning to seem stale.

Meetings are held either at midday or prior to the workday, 8-9 a.m. All but one county found it necessary to provide food. The length of meetings averages 1¼ hours but ran two hours in one county. The morning meetings break up more quickly. Both Cumberland County and Berks County have morning meetings and try to finish within an hour. There is some networking before and after the meetings. Pike County tries to schedule its luncheon meetings at a time before or after other board meetings, e.g., the prison board.

Several CJABs spent some time in their formative stage in charting the criminal justice process. This proved to be a helpful and enlightening overview and revealed some problems that were amendable to a quick fix without a major study.

### ***Recommendations***

***If CJABs are to be policy boards, they should keep minutes and indicate policy decisions, as there has to be some record.***

***Attendance is a key indicator and should be recorded. Those who do not attend or send a deputy should be contacted and kept engaged, if possible, but attendance cannot be enforced through bylaws. If a chronic absentee is not a key official and simply uninterested, there should be a procedure to simply terminate membership by mutual consent.***

***The success of meetings, whether of the full CJAB membership or some committee, is ultimately measured by opportunity to participate and by a sense of achievement as a group. Agendas should be issue-oriented and should allow at least one-fourth of the meeting time for new issues and discussion.***

***Whether there are voting members or not, CJABs should operate by consensus. This entails consistent efforts outside of CJAB meetings and even committee meetings to build consensus.***

### **3. CJAB committees**

The major issues before a CJAB involve fiscal, political, and legal complexities that cannot be handled at a regular CJAB meeting. The solution of issues has to be developed at the committee level by persons with specialized knowledge and interest. CJAB success is determined at the committee level.

The chair of a committee (some committees have co-chairs) has an opportunity to display leadership, and many do. The selection of a committee chair is important and normally is made by the CJAB chair. Some bylaws may specify that the committee chair is a member. More often than not, the committee chair is a volunteer or an official whose expertise and interest make his

or her selection obvious, for example, the selection of a Mental Health (MH) Director to head a behavioral health committee.

One interesting departure from this pattern was the decision of the PJ/chair in Chester County to designate himself as chair of the Constable Committee, in recognition of the political volatility of the constable issue and the need for the President Judge to place his prestige on the line.

Every CJAB has an executive committee or its equivalent. Inasmuch as there are intervals of weeks or even months between CJAB meetings, bylaws often name an executive committee to act for the CJAB between regular meetings. Even where this is not formalized, there is a mechanism for making interim decisions. This is not a minor responsibility because the PCCD permits a very short period for responding on a concept paper, requiring a quick decision. The CJAB chair and vice-chair (if any) are on the executive committee, along with other key members of the power structure. In Franklin County, committee chairs are part of the executive committee. The CJAB coordinator, whether officially named or not, is essential to this expedited decision.

Committees vary widely in size from 4-5 to well over 10. CJABs have top officials who may not know some of the details that have to be considered in a program, so that committees include persons with nuts and bolts knowledge. Committees are used to bring in non-profits, for example, treatment providers. Mental health professionals are used to networking, so mental health committees tend to be broadly based. Committees often include a number of non-members.

Chester County takes the view that it is redundant to have top officials and also their division managers on the CJAB. The latter are assigned to committee work where they are most useful. The CJAB chair simply asks the top executive to select managers whose expertise is most relevant to the committee. Chester County has very large committees, using them for inclusion rather than having a large CJAB. Some committees are so large that they have a steering committee. Committees in Chester County are comprised predominantly of non-members.

CJABs have varied in approach to committee structure:

**Table 11: Committee Structure of CJABs**

County	Committee Structure
Berks	The Berks CJAB has no formal committee structure. All committees are ad hoc in response to an issue that arises. Because multiple issues are usually under consideration, there may be a number of committees in operation at a point in time.
Centre	The bylaws created a technology committee (includes J-NET) and a juvenile committee. The latter committee is moribund because the juvenile court judge has a different advisory mechanism. The CJAB has started creating ad hoc committees in response to issues--treatment court, mental health, and bail.
Chester	There are no standing committees, but there is an inherited J-NET committee and three more recent ad hoc committees--forensic diversion, bail, and central regional booking.
Cumberland	The CJAB uses ad hoc committees in response to specific issues. The mental health committee shows signs of becoming institutionalized because mental health issues pervade the system.
Franklin	Franklin CJAB bylaws do not establish committees, but the CJAB has created seven or eight committees, one of them an evaluation committee. There is a technology committee in addition to a J-NET committee. The other committees deal with issues--mental health being one. Some committees are inactive.
Lycoming	There is a technology committee that encompasses J-NET. There is also a central processing committee.
Pike	Pike set up a hierarchical committee structure--the working tier was mid-managers, the second tier division managers, and the third tier CJAB and elected officials. The first committee task was to create an organizational and procedural framework. Most ideas, even the bylaws, were the work of mid-managers and funneled upward to upper tiers that met less frequently and generally accepted the organizational and procedural proposals from mid-managers. The CJAB now has a functional committee for central processing and is moving into issues.

Because the issues confronting Pennsylvania counties are similar and because of the influence of PCCD, the CJABs in the survey had similar committees, for example, central booking or processing. Technology committees exist because CJABs have a J-NET policy role and an interest in development of technology in the criminal justice area. As a practical matter, progress in technology occurs without much CJAB involvement and is largely a function of county commitment to technology, but CJAB members have to stay informed. A technology committee is the link to this progress. Unique committees include: Juvenile Committee in Centre County, Constable Committee in Chester County, and Evaluation Committee in Franklin County. Mental health issues are so important that mental health committees are emerging as among the key committees and one that is almost required in a fully mature CJAB.

***Recommendations***

***CJABs should have both standing and ad hoc committees; the former for ongoing obligation, such as technology (J-NET included), the latter for issues that are short-term. An ad hoc committee comes***

*forward with ideas and may stay in existence during implementation and then expire. One type of committee that may endure simply because its subject matter scope covers a variety of possible programs would be mental health, but there is no point in a CJAB having such a committee or even CJAB members from the mental health community until the CJAB is ready to deal with mental health issues.*

*Committees can be used to include non-members and broaden the scope of the CJAB; this obviates the need for increasing CJAB size and involves people in the area that is their interest. Any committee should be chaired by a CJAB member, but the composition of the committee is flexible, as is the size. Committees that are large tend to develop steering committees or executive committees.*

## **F. Issues and Initiatives**

A useful insight into CJABs and how they operate is to look at the issues they address and the initiatives they launch. Some of these issues are common to many Pennsylvania counties; others are local in nature. The major initiatives are, for the most part, grant-funded.<sup>3</sup>

Because PCCD is the principal grantor for criminal justice initiatives, its funding strategy naturally leads to some similarity in the programs sponsored by CJABs. It appears, however, that the importance of mental health initiatives is opening up new funding areas.

The issues that concern CJABs and the initiatives that they undertake fall into seven categories. There is no category for juvenile issues, as they were seldom encountered; although Operation Night Light in Berks County, an off-hour reconnaissance to detect violators of terms of release, includes juvenile probation officers on the police-probation team.

**Dealing with delays in the movement of cases:** Some CJABs analyze the flow of cases and paper through the system and identify weaknesses, some of which can be addressed administratively without special funding. As noted above, Chester County has an unusually large number of active constables who are largely unsupervised, leading the CJAB to take a look at the constable situation. The Centre County CJAB has considered issues arising from a delay problem caused by belated issuance of orders by the prothonotary. The Cumberland County CJAB addressed a problem caused by failure to assess defendants at an early stage, thus delaying treatment or other alternatives until the case reached later stages in the process. The initiative was early assessment in the prosecutor's office using a special unit funded by PCCD.

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<sup>3</sup> In counties with newer CJABs, it was sometimes pointed out that prior to CJAB there were initiatives for progressive IP programs, treatment courts, and criminal justice IT improvement and that the CJAB simply stayed informed about them.

**Controlling jail population:** The Cumberland County CJAB started with an “earned time” program to control prison jail population. The Centre County CJAB has studied its pretrial detention system to ascertain its effect on jail population and general effectiveness. One initiative of the Berks county CJAB was a study of the difference in DJ bail practices, resulting in a suggested bail protocol. Day reporting issues have come before CJABs in several counties, notably Franklin and Berks. Assistance to parolees in getting established in the community, primarily living arrangements, has been considered by CJABs in several counties.

A corollary issue is new prison construction, the ultimate response to jail overcrowding. CJABs maintain links with the prison board and may lend support on new prisons and give advice on space planning and design. It is not unusual for a CJAB to have a prison committee and to stay closely informed on prison construction.

Also closely related to jail issues is the Intermediate Punishment program. This may be under the prison board or a CJAB and is almost invariably an important factor in the criminal justice system. Even where a CJAB is not the IP policy board, it has a stake in the programs funded through IP.

**Centralizing early events in criminal cases:** CJABs encompassed by the survey considered one or more of the following issues: central preliminary hearings, central processing, or central booking. Central booking drove video conferencing for DJs and participation in electronic photo and print identification. These centralizing endeavors have enjoyed PCCD support and have taken different forms. Berks County has a central booking grant with a central location in Reading; Cumberland County has a central booking grant with two booking locations.

Chester County received a \$149,134 PCCD grant in 2001 for Central Regional Booking. This project was centered in the Coatesville Police Department and was to serve the region adjacent to the city. The Coatesville PD had access to digital photo and print information at the state level, but there was still a necessity for video capability for district justices. This was provided from the coordinator grant. The concept called for staffing by constables that, for a variety of reasons, did not work well. A continuation grant proposal has been prepared by the Coordinator and is supported by the CJAB. It contains additional money for equipment. The involvement of the CJAB in the new grant was seen as a positive step. The initial grant had originated in the District Attorney’s Office without the same systemic participation provided by CJAB.

In Franklin County, the central booking proposal (written by the CJAB staff) did not receive commissioner approval. The commissioners envisioned central booking in the planned new prison, not Chambersburg. One issue that surfaced several times is how far committees should be involved in securing grant funding or commitments from agency budgets.

Lycoming County has a central processing initiative. The District Attorney's staff wrote the central processing application (\$247,000-first year from PCCD \$100,000). The CJAB failed in an attempt to obtain video conferencing equipment from CCAP, transforming the central booking program into a central processing program that was operable without video equipment.

Pike County received a \$99,500 grant for a Criminal Offender Processing System. This grant primarily funds a probation officer and county detective to run a COPS unit. Some of the technology to expedite the process is not yet in place. The process is not "central booking" as yet. It focuses on the preliminary hearing and is expected to increase police-probation task force initiatives to reduce the number of absconders, quicken the forwarding of records to repository, reduce the number of PSIs, and reduce time to sentencing for CAPS candidates.

**JNET and technology issues:** Some mature CJABs started the process of building a criminal justice technology infrastructure before J-NET was operational.

Berks County identified its initial issue as an integrated criminal justice information system (IJIS) at the local level, making it easier to tie into J-NET and the state databases. Its early IT advances included imaging, a jail information system, and a WAN to establish intra-county communication among police agencies that now go to J-NET through the WAN.<sup>4</sup> One consequence of going to imaging was that the CJAB supported a trial court administrator request for a grant to make Berks County compatible with a new AOPC system that did not allow for imaging. The county has instituted a police database system that permits police agencies to share police data and uses the digital identification data available through J-NET. The technology development in the justice area has been funded primarily by Berks County, roughly 90-10, an option not available in most counties.

Full J-NET access is a major issue for every second tier county in the survey. CJABs follow the increase in the number of users and training and occasionally deal with a question on right to access data through J-NET.

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<sup>4</sup> Berks County (Cumberland County, too) is used as a test site for new IT programs.

There are some local technology initiatives. Franklin County has invested in state-of-the-art courtrooms. Berks County developed jail software that has been made generally available. Chester County has acquired a notification server with funds from the probation fee account and the county, an interesting departure from grant reliance. A crime mapping server was funded through money from the third year of the continuation grant. This system loads data from the 911 system.

PCCD grants to fund IT development have sometimes been combined with CJAB coordinator grants. The Chester J-NET coordinator started in late 1999 under a three-year PCCD grant (75%-50%-25%). The grant amount per annum was \$100,000. This included money for equipment to permit local agencies to participate. Chester County had a local network for county level agencies that provided some infrastructure. The purpose of the grant was for full J-NET participation.

Pike County received a grant of \$111,111 to fund the Royal Technology Group (RTG) (already retained for some assessments under the coordinator grant) to assess user needs and provide training courses; attend CJAB meetings; evaluate the justice network and agency database; develop database reports; set up on-line communication with the county web; and provide secure extranet communication. The RTG group has created a court calendaring system that has involved the courts and the court user group.

**Mental health and forensic issues:** Mental behavioral issues run through almost every aspect of the justice system. Among the issues encountered in the survey were: need for crisis intervention, development of protocols for law enforcement officers dealing with mentally disturbed persons, treatment courts to prevent a recurring arrest pattern for substance abusers, or need for intervention to remove mentally unstable defendants from district justice court to the court of common pleas. The high incidence of inmates with serious mental problems is an issue considered by some CJABs, mainly access to state institutions and community care for prisoners who can function if they stay on a treatment routine.

Five of the seven counties in the survey had initiatives in the mental health area. Franklin County was circulating a recently developed protocol for dealing with mentally ill persons. Centre County developed a grant for a treatment court. The treatment court ad hoc committee developed a draft grant application but did not pursue it because funding prospects were deemed poor.

Cumberland County had a multi-faceted program with crisis intervention, protocols, and training. The first year of a forensic grant in Cumberland County was funded by the Department of Welfare/Drug and Alcohol. The treatment court in Berks County is funded by a DOT grant as the court focused on alcohol abuse. Other forms of substance abuse are to be added.

The Forensic Diversion Committee of the Chester CJAB has been the beneficiary of a \$250,000 grant through the Department of Community Development. This was facilitated by a state senator with a strong interest in mental health. The HS Department, in conjunction with the Adult Probation Office, handled the application. This initiative predated CJAB but came under its umbrella. The senator had discussed the initiative with the president judge who was concerned over creation of a resource intensive treatment court in addition to the existing drug court. The judge favored other options for early identification and diversion of mentally ill offenders. The Forensic Diversion Committee retained a consultant to produce a set of options.

Closely related to the above forensic initiatives is the issue of domestic battery. An ad hoc committee of the Centre County CJAB, with the help of the criminal justice planning office, prepared a competitive concept paper on battery intervention to secure a federal grant.

**Organizational issues:** CJABs, particularly those that are new, face organizational issues about scope, mission, leadership, membership inclusion, process, and role, but arguably, the most important issue is staff support. Newer CJABs need administrative support without which no CJAB can function successfully. The first initiative of a new CJAB may be to seek funding for a PCCD coordinator and to ensure that the county picks up the position.

In four counties, the coordinator position received some PCCD support. In two counties the coordinator was funded through the IP program. In Centre County, PCCD funded enlargement of the criminal justice planning unit (the coordinator was already the head), so the CJAB had three persons available to it. Franklin County received a four-year grant to fund a part-time administrative assistant and technology improvement. The grant is \$50,000 per annum with a county match of the same amount. Pike County, as noted above, also received a grant for a coordinator. It is possible to have an agency volunteer staff support, making the staffing issue less pressing.

**Grant issues:** Commissioners in less affluent counties have serious problems with grants that require match. This limits CJAB options and may defeat even the best of efforts. The survey revealed that commissioners had rejected a number of recent CJAB initiatives that

required county match. The main issue for CJABs is county relations, particularly the delicate fiscal issues. Some CJABs have used probation fees and special court costs to augment the local funds available for programs and to make programs more acceptable to commissioners. In Franklin County, the CJAB coordinator helped the Sheriff to obtain radios through block grant money, an avenue that is not usually fruitful but nonetheless possible.

Another issue is how to deal internally with short-term decisions on concept papers or, more basically, how to be creative and to influence funding agencies.

### ***Recommendations***

***A CJAB can be passive or proactive. In the former mode, the CJAB simply responds to PCCD announcements that appear relevant to some need. In the latter mode, the CJAB identifies problems to be addressed and goes after funding or devises means to address a need without grants. Being proactive involves more risks but is more likely to produce success.***

***CJABs need some guidance on how to address grants, what grants to consider, how to document their recommendation, and how they bring their views before the commissioners. Dealing with the commissioners, despite local political considerations, is part of the process, particularly the match element, the public impact, and cost benefit of the program to be funded, and the supporting information accompanying the recommendation.***

***CJABs cannot ignore the funding opportunities presented by grant agencies, but they should try to influence policy if they have ideas and to be creative in funding.***

***More consideration should be given to grant sources other than PCCD and to improvements that can be effected without grant funding.***

***The PCCD time frame for concept papers is inconsistent with the PCCD objective to have CJABs serve as coordinators of grant activity.***

### **G. Success**

There is a broad consensus that the ultimate justification of a CJAB's existence is its positive effect on the operation of the criminal justice system. The informational, networking, and communication benefits of a CJAB are appreciated but are secondary to the goal of system improvement. It was evident from interviews that a substantive achievement was almost a sine qua non for institutionalizing a CJAB.

CJAB members have no doubt that success is a function of successful programs, but there is some confusion about whether success of a CJAB can be evaluated by the type of quantitative measures associated with a specific program. Measures abound at the operational level - number of J-NET users, completion of treatment programs and low recidivism among those treated, increased officer street time due to central booking, and stable jail population in connection with a jail overcrowding program. It is hard, however, to devise measures applicable to a coordinating group without management authority and a vague systemic role.

The Cumberland County commissioners requested the CJAB to devise a high-level strategic plan. There is a circulating three-year plan with a set of goals and objectives and proposed performance measures. Nothing has been adopted formally, and there is some concern over performance measures because it is not altogether clear whose performance is being measured, the system or individual agencies.<sup>5</sup> The Franklin County CJAB has from the outset considered evaluation criteria and created a committee for that purpose, but the issue lies unresolved. In a county with a new CJAB, it may be premature to look for system impact.

At best, the cause-effect relationship between a CJAB initiative and a particular result is tenuous. A CJAB can initiate a program, build consensus, and facilitate funding, but the agencies that run the program will determine its success or failure. The CJAB exists to foster improvements that are systemic in nature and beyond the defined areas of various system components, but because the CJAB has no executive or governing authority, its effect on the system is indirect. Some of the mature CJABs are rightly considered effective because they have initiated programs that have brought about improvements, but they operate in counties where there are cooperative and effective departments and agencies and where information technology has received county support. This does not mean that CJABs transcend evaluation, only that they do not lend themselves to the type of measurements that are used for specific programs.

CJAB members who were interviewed had already made a personal assessment of the effectiveness of their CJAB. In the counties with newer CJABs, there were few completed improvements to hail, although there were programs and initiatives in the early stages. Where programs were lacking, delayed, or rejected by county commissioners, there was

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<sup>5</sup> Realistically, a CJAB can identify issues it wants to address in the short term, but it may not be well suited to do strategic planning for a "system."

discouragement. It is clear that it takes time for a CJAB to launch programmatic initiatives, so newer CJABs are not likely to be having much impact on the system. In the five counties with newer CJABs, the tendency was to evaluate the CJAB by criteria other than substantive achievement and to point to other advantages:

- Networking opportunities at meetings. Some officials commented that they can in a short time make contact with other officials that they need to see and therefore make it a point to attend.
- The presence of key decision-makers in the same room with a common forum to exchange ideas on the system, not just department interests.
- Access to the judiciary and the commissioners, so that they hear the needs and concerns of managers in various parts of the system.
- Information on new developments.
- Opportunity to build support for programs.
- Possibility of making CJAB a central clearing house on policy recommendations.
- Creation of criminal justice planning capability (mentioned frequently in Centre County).

CJABs are being evaluated frequently, by their own initiative or that of some outside group. In determining success, newer CJABs can best be evaluated by process and organizational goals that they have set. In fact, the neutral evaluations performed to date have been process evaluations that concentrated on procedural developments, such as meeting participation, attendance, mission statement goals, and inclusion.

In Berks County and Cumberland County, members of the CJAB measured effectiveness by projects that had been completed and concrete achievements that they could point to with satisfaction. They did not discount the other advantages, but clearly evaluated their CJAB by its ability to devise practical solutions to systemic problems. In both counties, veteran members enumerated a list of programs that in their opinion changed the system for the better and started new business practices. At some point, CJAB evaluation should emphasize initiatives put forward by CJABs, the actual programmatic implementation of these initiatives, and the system impact according to the measures set forth in connection with the specific program. This is a three-step evaluation that will inevitably have some qualitative features such as perception of justice system officials on impact.

Although progress in technology is important and largely measurable, it does not seem to be attributed to CJABs. In all seven counties, advances were made in J-NET and intra-county technological development, but these were seldom cited as achievements except by those

members involved in technology and having an active J-NET role. The major exception to this was Berks County where the early CJAB objectives were very IT-oriented. CJAB members in other counties were, of course, aware of and proud of technology advances in their county but saw this as something occurring outside CJAB and not as a CJAB achievement unless the technological advance was integral to a CJAB program initiative. CJAB coordinators and CJAB members with a technology role were vocal in interviews about J-NET progress and IT infrastructure development and spoke of the number of J-NET users, the number of persons trained, the extent of access to state databases, and the extent of information sharing and communication within the county justice community.

County IT directors commonly sit on CJAB boards and are important communicators. They keep the CJAB informed and may obtain some user feedback. Grant applications for criminal justice technology generally emanate from the county IT unit and are not objects of close CJAB scrutiny. The fact is that the complexities of information system development are such that the CJAB is more of an interested observer than a participant. They see technological development as the province of experts. The other fact is that some counties, Pike for example, have a very weak IT infrastructure and a user group that requires a lot of training. PCCD grants fund Pike County consultant support and elementary training. The coordinator is a leader in this development.

The recently established CJABs are like the new kid on the block and have to establish areas where they can make a contribution. As long as there are multiple boards and departmental turf issues, CJABs will, at first, have a narrow window of opportunity, but will grow as credibility increases.

### ***Recommendations***

***It is not realistic to expect a relatively new CJAB to have a system impact. They have to be initially evaluated by other criteria, including organizational and procedural progress.***

***It not realistic to measure CJAB impact according to a strict social science methodology, but a CJAB can be indirectly credited with impact if the programs it supports are systemic in nature and achieve their qualitative and quantitative objectives.***

***Mature CJABs should be evaluated for impact and continuing effectiveness, lest a CJAB have some achievements and lapse into inertia.***

***System impact can take the form of improvements that transcend departments and solve a problem but do not require major programs or grant funding. There should be more emphasis on these types of improvements that produce satisfaction, are not unduly complex, and give a CJAB vitality while waiting for the big win.***

## **Conclusion**

Some CJABs are struggling, and some have vocal critics, but there is an overwhelming consensus that CJABs serve important purposes:

- Improved communications within the criminal justice system
- Enhanced collaboration among criminal justice agencies
- Improved high-level decision-making on systemic issues
- Greater access to judges and commissioners in presenting needs
- Development of a systemic outlook and improved knowledge of system operations and linkage
- Generation of new ideas and funding strategies
- Issue resolution, the hallmark of effective CJABs
- Most importantly, ability to effect improvements in the system