

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT Juvenile Justice Roundtables:

ROUNDTABLES CONVENED BY PROSECUTORS	Under M.G.L. c20 s32, District Attorneys may convene meetings of schools, law enforcement officials, social service agencies to gather information about youth to address youth violence and ensure school safety, information that they could not get at all or would require court approval. This applies to all families with school age children in the Commonwealth. The statute was expanded in 2004. In Essex and Hampshire counties, <i>school nurses and members of the private sector</i> are also invited to attend and share information at roundtables.
EXCLUDE PARENTS	Roundtables harm families by failing to notify and excluding parents from discussion of their children. The law does not require exclusion of parents; but it has been the policy of the DA's to exclude them. Rep. Fox filed House Bill _____ which would amend the statute to require DA's notify and invite parents to attend the roundtable meetings when their children are discussed.
SCHOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based roundtables are used to target youth who are <i>not</i> involved in the juvenile justice system. This practice leads to increased searches, suspensions and expulsions of youth to their educational detriment and to unclear impacts on school safety. • This statute has eliminate school's requirement to notify parents that information they collect is turned over to DA's and law enforcement. • Any public, private or parochial school student who confides health or safety concerns to a teacher could find that confidence revealed to members of a roundtable. • Schools could share details of children's special education evaluations and treatment plans including the medications they are taking and privileged school psychologists' evaluations without the parents of student being aware.
SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS	Social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors and nurses working in public agencies would be in no position to oppose agency pressure to disclose information to the police and district attorneys.
SCHOOL NURSES	School nurses could be compelled to disclose names of students who request condoms or birth control; the students could then be subject to criminal prosecution for statutory rape and risk inclusion in the sex offender registry.
DSS	Under this statute, DSS may reveal whether the family is receiving services, the content of abuse and neglect reports and investigation, family history including confidential information on family histories of mental illness, substance, physical and sexual abuse, and domestic violence. This information is frequently misreported; SB 1102 gives parents no notice or opportunity to verify the accuracy of the information.
DMH	Under this statute, DMH is authorized to reveal to law enforcement children's and families' mental health records including, drug and alcohol counseling and treatment, divorce and custody issues, medications, and hospitalizations.
DPH	DPH is authorized to reveal parents' or family members' HIV and STD status as well as unrelated medical information.
SB 1102 takes too many risks with too many families for no tangible increase	

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?	<p>Prosecution: District Attorneys and police will be able to gather information for prosecution of juveniles that they could not get at all or would require court approval. This applies to all children, including those who have not engaged in any criminal misconduct.</p> <p>Family Integrity: This bill is an open-ended invitation to invade children's and families' lives by permitting the exchange of confidential information forbidden by other state and federal laws. When students and parents realize their confidences can be violated for the purposes of criminal prosecution, they will not seek help from agencies which share it with law enforcement.</p>
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