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KIMBERLY J. DANIEL  
GLENN L. CLAYTON II  
JANINE M. SAXE  
THOMAS P. SOTELO  
MAHA-REBEKAH R. ABEJUJELA  
JONATHAN D. FRIEDEN  
JUDGES

## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT  
19<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
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CLERK OF COURT

FRANK L. DEIRHOI  
JANE P. DELBRIDGE  
MICHAEL J. VALENTINE  
TEENA D. GRODNER  
HELEN F. LEINER  
RETIRED JUDGES

ARNOLD B. KASSABIAN  
1976-1994

PHILIP N. BROPHY  
1974-1980

### Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Our commitment to Equal Justice Under Law

The Judicial system of the United States is founded upon a fundamental and guiding principle that every human being is deserving of respect and entitled to equal justice under the law. As our nation continues to grapple with recent events, the Supreme Court of Virginia and many other state supreme courts have issued statements addressing the problem of racism in our society and in the criminal justice system, in particular. In a June 16, 2020 letter to the Judiciary and the members of the Bar of Virginia, the justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia stated:

“As Judges we must take all steps possible to ensure that in the courtrooms of the Commonwealth, all people are treated equally and fairly with dignity under the law. It is a moral imperative that we do so.”

The undersigned judges of the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court join in the commitment to equal justice under law for all who seek justice in the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Further, the undersigned judges, individually and collectively, are committed to fair access to justice; equal application of the law; fairness; and will continue to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. We stand committed to these core values and recommit ourselves to examine, re-examine and as necessary, expand these core values to ensure equal application of the law and to eliminate the effects of systemic racism in the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

We, collectively, as judicial leaders, have a responsibility to ensure our actions and decisions reflect equal justice under law without regard to race; ethnicity; gender; sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; national origin or socio-economic status. Further, as judicial leaders we are committed to the identification and elimination of any issues or barriers, to equal justice, regarding any aspect of the court and its operations.

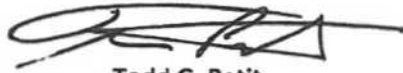
In reaffirming our commitment to equal justice under law, we will continue to examine and review the court’s practices, programs, services and initiatives currently in place, to ensure equal access to justice in the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. The following list is not exhaustive but is a brief example of the practices, programs, services and initiatives that have been implemented by this court to address public safety; improve outcomes for children and families involved in this court and to address the over-representation of children of color in the juvenile justice and child welfare (abuse and neglect/foster care) systems and to promote fair, equal, effective and timely justice:

- **Use of Validated, Evidenced Based Risk and Needs Assessments** to guide decision making and to improve racial and ethnic equity by examining data to identify policies and practices that may disadvantage youth, particularly youth of color, at various stages of the process, and pursuing strategies to ensure a more level playing field for youth regardless of race or ethnicity.
- **School Diversion Program Alternative Accountability Program (AAP)** to reduce the number of juveniles entering the juvenile justice system and to create systems of support for youth across agencies. AAP specifically targets the disproportionate number of Black and Latino students who are over-represented in the school discipline and juvenile justice system. AAP is a collaboration between this court; Fairfax County Public Schools; the police departments of Fairfax and Vienna; Northern Virginia Mediation Services; and the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services.
- **Juvenile Justice Transformation** including bifurcation of juvenile adjudication and disposition as well as a complete analysis and risk assessment (through an investigation and report) to determine the appropriate disposition for a juvenile offender. Some of the factors assessed include the juvenile's pattern of offending; family strengths and protective factors; history of any substance abuse; aggression/violence; mental health and trauma; juvenile's attitude and cognitive skills; risk to re-offend; criminogenic needs of the juvenile and the availability of services and treatment to address the needs of the juvenile and his/her family.
- **Diversion** including diverting low-risk, first time offenders
  - Diversion First
  - Increased use of Detention Alternatives
  - AAP (see above).
- **Comprehensive Probation System Review**
  - Graduated Responses and Sanctions.
- **Trauma Informed Court**
- **Education and training on adolescent brain growth and development**
- **Restorative Justice**
- **Best Practice Court (Child Dependency)**
- **Racial and Ethnic Disparities (Red Team)** works collaboratively within the Court Services Unit to assist in the development and implementation of effective practices to reduce ethnic and racial disparities within the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.
- Ongoing and relevant **judicial training**, education and programs that address the necessity of diversity, inclusion and equity (DEI), including racial and ethnic identity as well as cultural sensitivity and bias/implicit bias.
- Ongoing and relevant **court staff** (including clerks; Court Services Unit; core partners and service providers) **training**, education and programs that address the necessity of diversity, inclusion and equity (DEI), including racial and ethnic identity as well as cultural sensitivity and bias/implicit bias.
- Use of **certified or competently trained interpreters** and translators for litigants in which English is not their first language.
- **Ongoing collaboration and partnerships with our core stakeholders** (to ensure equal access to justice) including Fairfax Department of Family Services; Fairfax County Public Schools; Fairfax County Police Department; Fairfax Community Services Board; Office of the Commonwealth Attorney; Office of the Sheriff; Public Defender's Office; Fairfax Bar Association and others.

- **Judicial participation at the local, state and national level** to further educate ourselves on the need for positive systemic reform efforts in all areas of juvenile justice.

These practices, programs, services and initiatives reflect our core values and commitment to equal justice under law. The development and implementation of these practices, programs, services and initiatives illustrate our commitment to transparency; accountability and our willingness to continue to achieve the goals of these practices, programs, services and initiatives. In addition, we are committed to continuing in these efforts as well as intensify our efforts to combat racial prejudice within the justice system, both explicit and implicit, and to recommit to examine what systemic change is needed to make equality under law a reality for all who appear and seek justice in the Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Signed: October 9, 2020



Todd G. Petit

Chief Judge, Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court



Judge Gayl Y. Branum Carr



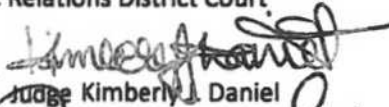
Judge Glenn L. Clayton, II



Judge Thomas P. Sotelo



Judge Jonathan D. Frieden



Judge Kimberly L. Daniel



Judge Janine M. Saxe



Judge Mana-Rebekah Abejuela