



PARISH COURTS OF JAMAICA – CIVIL DIVISION

(APRIL 1, 2023 – MARCH 31, 2024)

Court Metrics	April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024 Highlights				
	April - June 2023	July - September 2023	January - December 2023	January - March 2024	Fiscal Year 2023/2024
Gross Case Clearance Rate	138.77	114.30	117.13	103.03%	110.22
Trial Date Certainty Rate	91.42	97.00	77.57	91.71%	78.46
Average Time to Disposition	18.12	12.79	12.52	11.07	14.17
	months	months	months	months	months

Table of Contents

CHIEF JUSTICE’S MESSAGE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024, CIVIL COURT	3
Executive Summary	4
Methodology	7
Introduction.....	9
1.0 Aggregate Case Activity Data Summary	10
2.0 Claims Filed.....	12
3.0 New Civil Cases Filed per 10,000 Population	13
4.0 Frequently Occurring Reasons for Adjournment	15
5.0 Times to Disposition	16
6.0 Methods of Disposition	24
7.0 Civil Case Backlog	25
8.0 Trial Court Activity Summary.....	27
9.0 Case Management Date	30
10.0 Key Performance Indicators for the Civil Divisions of the Parish Courts for the Fiscal Year 2023 /2024	32
Conclusion	34
Glossary of Statistical Terms	36

List of Tables

Executive Summary

Table i: Key Performance Metrics of High-Performing Courts	6
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All Parish Courts-Data Summaries

Table 1.1 Aggregate data summaries – all Parish Courts: Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	10
Table 1.2: Comparative Analysis of Actual and Forecasted Case Clearance Rates.	11
Table 2.1: Sampling distribution of claims filed during the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	12
Table 3.1 Sampling distribution of new cases filed per 10,000 in the civil division of the parish courts in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	13
Table 4.1 Sampling distribution of the most frequently occurring reasons for adjournment for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	15

Table 5.1	Sampling distribution of the times to disposition as at the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	16
Table 5.2	Descriptive statistics on the time to disposition for cases disposed as at fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	18
Table 5.3	Sampling distribution of the times to disposition in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	20
Table 5.4	Descriptive statistics on the time to disposition for cases disposed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	22
Table 6.1	Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	24
Table 7.1	Net and gross criminal case backlog as at the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	25
Table 8.1	Time interval between major events for cases that had a trial date in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	27
Table 8.2	Trial court activity summary during the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	28
Table 8.3	Distribution of methods of disposition for matters set for trial during the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	29
Table 9.1	Summary of case appearance frequency for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	30
Table 9.2	Summary of the average court appearance frequency for cases disposed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	31
Table 10.1	Critical performance summaries for the civil division of the parish courts in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024	.....	32

CHIEF JUSTICE'S MESSAGE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024, CIVIL COURT

The Civil Division of the Parish Courts continue to perform excellently. The average time to disposition was 14.7 months. This means that generally, across the Parish Courts in civil matters, litigants can expect their matters to be disposed of less than 15 months. This is quite impressive. This result has been the result of consistent effort by judges, staff, lawyers, litigants and other stakeholders.

The data show that different courts have different average times to disposition. It is now appropriate to examine the case load minutely to determine the kinds of cases that make up the caseload of the various courts to see whether it is feasible or desirable to have different time standards for different courts. If different time standards were established for each court and the time reduced to the absolute minimum without compromising quality, it would be the ultimate achievement in legal service delivery.

This high level of performance of the Parish Courts over the last three years has made it possible to take steps to reduce our average gross backlog to less than 10%. This will take concerted effort. However, the leadership and staff have the drive, motivation, and desire to make a considerable effort to achieve this milestone.

The judiciary is about to commence the process of developing and introducing an integrated electronic case management system that should improve efficiency by (i) reducing processing time for each case; (ii) reducing the time it takes to produce orders for litigants; (iii) by making it possible for persons to verify orders from the courts; and (iv) making storage and retrieval of information easier.

The judiciary is committed to the idea and practice of continuous improvement so that service delivery is enhanced, which in turn improves governance. The coming year should be a better year than this one.

The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD

Chief Justice of Jamaica

Executive Summary

The Honourable Chief Justice has set ambitious strategic objectives for the court system, including a targeted court-wide case clearance rate of 130%, a trial date certainty rate of 85%, and an overall net case backlog rate of under 5%. The 2023/2024 fiscal year report indicates that the Civil Division of the Parish Courts is on track to achieve these targets.

During the report period, the Civil Division recorded a gross case clearance rate of 110.22%, meeting the international standard for this metric. Notably, the St. Catherine Parish Court and the Hanover Parish Court exceeded the court-wide target with rates of 147.13% and 146.54%, respectively. Overall, nine parish courts surpassed the international standard of 100% for case clearance rates. However, the minimum annual standard for the gross case disposal rate was not met in any of the Civil Division of the Parish Courts, which is not unusual for civil courts. The overall trial date certainty rate was 78.46%, falling short of the required standard. The average time to dispose of a civil case was approximately 425 days (14.17 months), with the St. Mary, Clarendon, and Trelawny Parish Courts achieving the lowest average times of 4.49 months, 6.67 months, and 6.99 months, respectively.

The backlog rate is a critical metric examined in this report. As of the end of the 2023/2024 fiscal year, the estimated gross case backlog rate in the Civil Division was 19.61%, exceeding the maximum targeted value of 10%. However, when inactive cases are excluded, the net case backlog rate is approximately 2.38%, meeting the annual required standard of 5%. The Clarendon, St. Thomas, and Trelawny Parish Courts performed best on this metric, each with less than 2.0% of active civil cases in a state of backlog.

Several factors contributed to delays in the timely and efficient progression of cases, including no returns, the absence of defendants, the absence of both parties, parties in discussion, and referrals to mediation. The five main methods of case disposition were struck out, settlements, consent judgments, default judgments, and withdrawals.

The Civil Division of the Parish Courts continues to demonstrate commendable performance, having achieved the target of reducing the overall net case backlog rate to under 5%. As of the end of the 2023/2024 fiscal year, the division is well-positioned to make significant contributions to the overall quantitative targets. The Judiciary of Jamaica is on a coherent path towards becoming a world-class judiciary, leveraging innovation and technology to deliver efficient services and provide sound and timely judgments in an environment where all stakeholders are valued.

With over eight years of extensive data on case activity in the parish courts of Jamaica, Lagrange multiplier techniques were applied to determine the minimum requirements that a highly successful court must meet in order to satisfy an efficiency threshold for the sustainable containment of case backlog and to provide optimal service to the public. The minimum annual required standards for each key parameter are summarized in the table below:

Table i: Key Performance Metrics of High-Performing Courts

Parameter	Minimum Annual Required Standard
Case Disposal Rate	$\geq 75\%$
Case Clearance Rate	$\geq 100\%$
Case Congestion Rate	$\leq 115\%$
Trial Date Certainty Rate	$\geq 85\%$
Net Case Backlog Rate	$\leq 5\%$
Gross Case Backlog Rate	$\leq 10\%$
Average Number of Mentions	≤ 3

If any court or jurisdiction can consistently achieve these rates, it will attain a high level of efficiency and service excellence, characteristic of high performing courts.

Methodology

To create a data-driven enterprise for policymaking and operational decisions, the Judiciary of Jamaica ensures the reliability and validity of the data used to produce the periodic Court Statistics Reports is maintained to be of paramount importance. Consequently, a robust and verifiable system of data production has been established in both the parish courts and the Supreme Court.

In the parish courts, a data capture system for criminal matters, known as the Case Information Statistical System (CISS), has been operational in all courts for the past eight years. This system captures a comprehensive range of data on the progression of cases from initiation to disposition and is managed by at least one dedicated Data Entry/Statistical Officer in each court. These officers update the system daily to ensure that the data produced, is as close to real-time as possible. The electronic data sheets for each parish court are then validated and backed up to the network at the end of each month, with the data submitted to a centralized, secure medium for processing by the Statistics and Data Division at the Supreme Court.

A comprehensive data validation mechanism is in place to periodically sample case files in all parish courts on a quarterly basis. In each instance, a representative sample of case files is taken and cross-checked against the electronic data to detect and eliminate errors of omission and commission. Monthly statistical data is processed using these submissions, culminating in Quarterly Reports and eventually the Annual Report. All Quarterly and Annual Parish Court Statistics Reports produced are published on the website of the Supreme Court; however, interim data required by stakeholders may be requested through the Office of the Chief Justice.

Disclaimer

The numbers reflected in the case activity summaries in the annual statistics report may vary slightly from those quoted in the individual quarterly reports throughout the year due to occasional constraints with timely access to all records and other mitigating factors. Methodological adjustments may also result in slight variations in comparative figures across periods. Note, progressive improvements in the strength of the data collection mechanism in some courts have positively impacted measurement outcomes.

Introduction

This report provides an overview of case activity in the Civil Division of the Parish Courts of Jamaica for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, ending on March 31, 2024. It covers key areas such as the number of new cases filed, cases disposed of, and inactive cases during the period. Additionally, the report examines the leading methods of case disposition and reasons for adjournments. Crucial efficiency indicators, including case clearance and disposal rates, as well as trial date certainty, are calculated to measure court performance where data is available. These metrics serve as important benchmarks for evaluating the courts, both individually and comparatively.

For several courts, the data is based on population estimates derived from representative samples, ensuring reliability and data integrity. However, one limitation is that data collection timelines differ between courts, affecting comparability at this stage. In some instances, scientific sampling methods are used to fill data gaps. The report concludes with cumulative case activity summaries for the Civil Courts for the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

1.0 Aggregate Case Activity Data Summary

Table 1.1: Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Approximate number of new cases	Approximate number of disposed and inactive cases (of those originating in the year)	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases in the year	Approximate Gross Disposal Rate (%)	Approximate Gross Case Clearance Rate (%)	Approximate Gross Trial Date Certainty Rate (%)	Overall Average Time to Disposition (months)
16274	9230	17937	56.72	110.22	78.46	14.17

Note: For the Corporate Area Civil Court, the gross case disposal rate was calculated only using the new big claims filed in the year

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the civil division of the parish courts in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. It shows that a total of 16,274 new cases were filed over the fiscal period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024, of which 9,230 (56.72%) were disposed of or marked inactive. The gross number of disposed and inactive cases, including those from previous years, amounted to 17,937 resulting in an estimated gross clearance rate of 110.22%. The trial date certainty rate stood at 78.46%, with an average time to disposition of 14.17 months.

Table 1.2. Comparative Analysis of Aggregated Actual and Forecasted Case Clearance Rates

COURT	Actual 2023/2024 Average Case Clearance Rate (%)	Forecasted 2023/2024 Case Clearance Rate (%)	Residual	Squared Error	Absolute Percentage Error
Parish Courts - Civil Division	110.22	102.50	7.72	59.60	7.00

Table 1.2 presents the case clearance rates for the Civil Division of The Parish Courts during the 2023/2024 fiscal year (April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024), comparing actual performance to forecasted expectations. The actual case clearance rate was 110.22%, indicating that the court resolved more cases than were filed, demonstrating strong efficiency in case management. The forecasted case clearance rate was 102.50%, underestimating the court's actual performance by 7.72 percentage points.

While the actual case clearance rate significantly exceeded the forecast, an analysis of forecast accuracy reveals a squared error of 59.60 and an absolute percentage error of 7.00%. These metrics suggest a moderate level of forecast inaccuracy, despite the positive performance outcome.

Overall, the Civil Division of the Parish Courts demonstrated better than anticipated performance during the 2023/2024 fiscal year, exceeding the forecasted case clearance rate.

2.0 Claims Filed

Table 2.1: Sampling distribution of claims filed during the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Courts	Big Claims	Small Claims	POCA	Miscellaneous	Total
Corporate area	4324	-	4	-	4328
Portland	405	47	-	-	452
St. Ann	1790	316	5	-	2111
St. Catherine	2606	257	-	-	2863
St. Mary	513	132	-	-	645
St. Thomas	529	192	-	-	721
Trelawny	481	116	-	-	597
Westmoreland	803	179	-	-	982
St. James	1063	521	-	-	1584
Clarendon	1065	187	-	-	1252
Total	13579	1947	9	0	15535

The above table provides an overview of claims files handled by the Parish Courts in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. The sample of 15,535 new claims filed in the 2023/ 2024 fiscal year reveals that 13,579 or 87.41% were big claims, while 12.53% were small claims and 0.06% were matters concerning proceeds of crime (POCA). The Corporate Area Court-Civil Division, the St. Catherine Parish Court, and the St. Ann Parish Court account for the largest share of new complaints filed in the fiscal year. The Corporate Area Court-Civil Division, the St. Catherine, and the St. Ann Parish Courts account for the largest share of big claims filed in the fiscal year, while the St. James, St. Ann and the St. Catherine Parish Court account for the largest shares of small claims filed. This distribution highlights the significant workload and diversity of claims handled by the Parish Courts, with the Corporate Area and St. Ann being particularly noteworthy for their high volumes and types of claims handled.

3.0 New Civil Cases Filed per 10,000 Population

Table 3.1: Sampling distribution of new cases filed per 10,000 in the civil division of the parish courts in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Number of new cases filed	Population size in parish	Case per 10,000 population
Hanover	462	69,533	66
St. Catherine	2355	516,218	46
Westmoreland	720	144,103	50
St. Mary	563	113,615	50
Clarendon	1070	245,103	44
Portland	290	81,744	35
St. Elizabeth	1298	150,205	86
Corporate Area Criminal	3972	662,426	60
St. Thomas	617	93,902	66
St. James	1391	183,811	76
St. Ann	1622	172,362	94
Trelawny	555	75,164	74
Manchester	1359	189,797	72
Total	16274	2697983	60

The table above outlines the number of new civil cases filed per 10,000 population in the parish courts (civil division) for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. The population sizes used are based on the last national population census in 2011, and therefore, the data may not fully reflect current values.

Nevertheless, this data provides valuable insights into the demand for civil adjudication in various parishes and highlights patterns and trends within the judicial workload in the civil division of the parish courts, relative to population distribution across Jamaica. The total number of new civil cases filed across all parishes was 16,274. These cases were distributed among a total population of 2,697,983, resulting in an average rate of 60 cases per 10,000 residents. However, individual parishes exhibit notable variation in case rates per capita, indicative of differences in population size, socio-economic factors, and local dynamics within each parish.

The parish of St. Ann, which is among the courts with larger caseloads and has a midrange population size of 172,362, registered the highest rate of 94 cases per 10,000 population in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. St. Elizabeth recorded the second highest rate of 86 cases per 10,000 population also having a midrange population size. Equally interesting is the result that the parish of Portland had the smallest number of new cases filed (260) and is the parish that recorded the lowest rate of 35 cases per 10,000 population and among the smaller parishes having a population size of 81,744. The Clarendon Parish Court recorded the second lowest rate of 44 per 10,000 population, followed by the St. Catherine Parish Court, with 46 per 10,000 population.

4.0 Frequently Occurring Reasons for Adjournment

Table 4.1: Sampling distribution of the most frequently occurring reasons for adjournment the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Reasons for Adjournment	Count	Percentage (%)
No Return/Re-Issued	1836	26.39
Defendant Absent	928	13.34
Both Parties Absent	403	5.79
Parties in Discussion	279	4.01
Referred to mediation	212	3.05
Plaintiff Absent	141	2.03
Pending Settlement	94	1.35
Attorney Absent	60	0.86
Hearing of Application	54	0.78
New Date	53	0.76
Sub-total	4060	58.36

(Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance = (6,957)

Note: DNA means that the accused 'did not appear'

**Referral to mediation encompasses referrals to Probation and to the Dispute Resolution Foundation*

The above table is derived using a sample of 6,957 reasons for adjournments/continuance for matters heard in the 2023/2024 fiscal year across all of the parish courts (civil division). The largest proportion (26.39%) was for no return/ for reissue. Adjournments due to the absence of defendants with 13.34% and the absence of both parties with 5.79% round out the top three reasons for adjournment across the parish courts. Parties in discussion with 4.01% and referrals to mediation with 3.05% round of the top five reasons for adjournment for the fiscal year. The leading reasons for adjournment listed above account for 58.36% of the total sample of adjournments.

5.0 Times to Disposition

Table 5.1: Sampling distribution of the times to disposition as at the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parishes	Time interval in days							Sample size (n)
	0-89 days	90-179 days	180-269 days	270-364 days	365 -547 days	548-729 days	730 days and over	
Corporate Area Civil Division	4774 (33.7%)	3364 (23.7%)	1686 (11.9%)	1205 (8.5%)	1329 (9.4%)	704 (5.0%)	1125 (7.9%)	14187 (100%)
St. Catherine	2204 (15.8%)	1888 (13.5%)	1199 (8.6%)	992 (7.1%)	1527 (10.9%)	1171 (8.4%)	4999 (35.8%)	13980 (100%)
St. James	633 (43.4%)	275 (18.8%)	124 (8.5%)	85 (5.8%)	140 (9.6%)	75 (5.1%)	127 (8.7%)	1459 (100%)
Clarendon	505 (37.5%)	389 (28.9%)	231 (17.1%)	96 (7.1%)	82 (6.1%)	39 (2.9%)	6 (0.4%)	1348 (100%)
Westmoreland	985 (56.4%)	338 (19.4%)	164 (9.4%)	93 (5.3%)	95 (5.4%)	38 (2.2%)	33 (1.9%)	1746 (100%)
St. Ann	1565 (31.6%)	1105 (22.3%)	560 (11.3%)	395 (8.0%)	531 (10.7%)	265 (5.4%)	530 (10.7%)	4951 (100%)
St. Thomas	704 (35.0%)	455 (22.6%)	224 (11.1%)	144 (7.2%)	177 (8.8%)	108 (5.4%)	201 (10.0%)	2013 (100%)
Portland	270 (33.6%)	208 (25.9%)	99 (12.3%)	68 (8.5%)	104 (13.0%)	15 (1.9%)	39 (4.9%)	803 (100%)
St. Mary	1549 (55.5%)	491 (17.6%)	216 (7.7%)	121 (4.3%)	187 (6.7%)	88 (3.2%)	140 (5.0%)	2792 (100%)
Trelawny	948 (55.5%)	315 (18.4%)	131 (7.7%)	89 (5.2%)	100 (5.9%)	52 (3.0%)	74 (4.3%)	1709 (100%)
% of Total	31.42	19.62	10.30	7.31	9.50	5.68	16.17	100
Average	1413.70	882.80	463.40	328.80	427.20	255.50	727.40	4498.80
Standard Deviation	1316.77	1013.27	544.25	419.53	545.42	382.27	1539.47	5177.29
Skewness	2.14	2.02	1.75	1.65	1.60	1.99	2.90	1.59

Number of charges sampled (N) = 44,988

Note: The data in this table covers case activity for at least the last 75 months across the parish courts

The table above shows the descriptive statistics on a sample of matters disposed for each parish court as at March 31, 2024. For each parish court, the estimates cover case activity for at least a 75-month period. The results shown suggest decisively that a significant proportion of the charges disposed of in the period took less than 90 days, accounting for roughly 31.42% of the disposals.

The Corporate Area Parish Court-Civil Division along with the parish courts of St. Catherine, St. Ann and St. Mary are among the courts accounting for the larger proportions of cases disposed of under 90 days. Cumulatively 68.65% of the matters disposed over the period took less than a year, a positive indicator of the potential effectiveness of the courts in increasing overall productivity and realizing the objective of becoming the best in the Caribbean region in three years and among the best in the world in 3-5 years. From the data set, the parish courts (civil division) of St. Catherine, Corporate Area Parish Court, and St. Ann had the largest proportion of their disposed matters taking more than a year. The data set also shows that roughly 16.17% of the matters disposed over the period took over 730 days or over 2 years. The parish courts civil division of the St. Catherine, Corporate Area Parish Court, and St. Ann had the largest proportion of their disposed matters taking more than 2 years. The skewness of the times taken by the respective parish courts to dispose of matters in this sample are all relatively high, indicating that in each case a larger proportion of the scores fell below the applicable series mean.

Table 5.2: Descriptive statistics on the time to disposition for cases disposed as at the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parishes	Time to disposition (days)							Sample size (N)
	Average	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Minimum	Maximum	
Corporate Area Civil Division	258.84	34	143	310.04	2.80	1	3078	14187
St. Catherine	595.33	28	455	519.01	0.94	1	2854	13980
St. James	241.69	28	110	316.59	2.57	1	2817	1459
Clarendon	164.40	63	120	145.18	1.81	2	1008	1348
Westmoreland	141.24	35	75	181.60	3.10	1	1568	1746
St. Ann	311.69	63	154	405.46	2.53	1	2793	4951
St. Thomas	275.96	28	140	342.06	2.32	1	2379	2013
Portland	219.20	63	147	223.72	2.03	2	1395	803
St. Mary	174.16	28	70.50	247.52	2.54	1	1634	2792
Trelawny	171.54	28	70	247.77	2.88	1	1674	1709
Total/Weighted Average	352.76	39.80	148.45	293.90	2.35	1.20	2120.00	4498.80
Standard Deviation	131.49	16.22	112.56	110.63	0.63	0.42	742.69	5177.29
Skewness	2.20	0.94	2.67	0.79	-1.31	1.78	-0.07	1.59

Number of charges sampled (N) = 44,988

Note: The data in this table covers case activity for at least the last 75 months across the parish courts

The table above shows the descriptive statistics on a sample of matters disposed for each parish court as at March 31, 2024. For each parish court, the estimates cover case activity for at least a 75-month period. The output produces an estimated overall weighted average time taken to dispose of matters in the parish courts (Civil Division) of approximately 353 days. The skewness of these times to disposition is a positive figure, suggesting that most of these times fell below the overall mean. For matters disposed in the period, the parish courts of Westmoreland (141 days), Clarendon (164 days) and Trelawny (172 days) took the lowest times on average to dispose of cases over the period. The parish courts of St. Catherine (595 days), St. Ann (312 days) and St. Thomas (276 days) demonstrate the highest times to disposition for matters disposed over the period of analysis.

The average variation among the times to disposition across the parish courts is shown to be modest, as conferred by the standard deviation of 131.49. The average minimum time taken to dispose of matters across all parish courts was 1.20 days; however, the average maximum times are substantially larger. These results are both a reflection of the relative complexity of cases entering open court over the period as well as the relative strength of case management across the various parish courts. The maximum times to disposition in the sample ranged from a low of 1,008 days (33.6 months/2.8 years) in the Clarendon Parish Court, to a high of 3,078 days (102.60 months/8.6 years) in the Corporate Area Parish Court-Civil Division. The overall skewness of the maximum times to disposition is a small negative value, which is an indication that a larger proportion of the maximum times to disposition were clustered around the series mean. The sample size used to compute these descriptive data was a substantial and representative 44,988 matters.

Table 5.3: Sampling distribution of the times to disposition in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parishes	Time interval in days							Sample size (n)
	0-89 days	90-179 days	180-269 days	270-364 days	365 -547 days	548-729 days	730 days and over	
Corporate Area Civil Division	349 (19.2%)	649 (35.6%)	302 (16.6%)	174 (9.6%)	138 (7.6%)	74 (4.1%)	135 (7.4%)	1821 (100%)
St. Catherine	356 (11.1%)	431 (13.5%)	366 (11.4%)	288 (9.0%)	269 (8.4%)	326 (10.2%)	1163 (36.4%)	3199 (100%)
St. James	278 (44.8%)	127 (20.5%)	61 (9.8%)	26 (4.2%)	50 (8.1%)	27 (4.3%)	52 (8.4%)	621 (100%)
Clarendon	192 (34.5%)	119 (21.4%)	108 (19.4%)	49 (8.8%)	55 (9.9%)	27 (4.9%)	6 (1.1%)	556 (100%)
Westmoreland	288 (36.1%)	104 (13.0%)	161 (20.2%)	79 (9.9%)	75 (9.4%)	46 (5.8%)	44 (5.5%)	797 (100%)
St. Ann	404 (36.5%)	197 (17.8%)	88 (7.9%)	79 (7.1%)	130 (11.7%)	67 (6.1%)	142 (12.8%)	1107 (100%)
St. Thomas	128 (38.4%)	74 (22.2%)	27 (8.1%)	26 (7.8%)	21 (6.3%)	18 (5.4%)	39 (11.7%)	333 (100%)
Portland	78 (25.7%)	67 (22.0%)	29 (9.5%)	21 (6.9%)	36 (11.8%)	8 (2.6%)	65 (21.4%)	304 (100%)
St. Mary	258 (68.1%)	60 (15.8%)	25 (6.6%)	4 (1.1%)	10 (2.6%)	10 (2.6%)	12 (3.2%)	379 (100%)
Trelawny	155 (56.6%)	45 (16.4%)	19 (6.9%)	13 (4.7%)	9 (3.3%)	14 (5.1%)	19 (6.9%)	274 (100%)
% of Total	26.47	19.94	12.63	8.08	8.44	6.57	17.86	-
Average	248.60	187.30	118.60	75.90	79.30	61.70	167.70	939.10
Standard Deviation	107.44	197.67	122.98	89.74	80.61	95.70	352.87	925.44
Skewness	-0.18	1.86	1.33	1.81	1.63	2.84	3.06	1.96

Number of charges sampled (N) = 9,391

The table above shows the descriptive statistics on a sample of matters disposed for each parish court in the 2023/2024 fiscal year ended March 31, 2024. The results shown suggest that only 26.47% of the charges disposed of in the period took less than 90 days. The St. Ann Parish Court along with the parish courts of St. Catherine, Corporate Area - Civil Division and Westmoreland are among the courts accounting for the larger proportions of cases disposed under 90 days. Cumulatively, 67.12% of the matters disposed over the period took less than a year.

From the data set, the parish courts (civil division) of St. Catherine, Corporate Area and St. Ann had the largest proportion of their disposed matters taking more than a year. The data set also shows that roughly 17.86% of the matters disposed over the period took over 730 days or over 2 years. The parish courts civil division of the St. Catherine, St. Ann and Corporate Area had the largest proportion of their disposed matters taking more than 2 years. The skewness of the times taken by the respective parish courts to dispose of matters in this sample are mostly relatively high, indicating that in each case a larger proportion of the scores fell below the applicable series mean.

Table 5.4: Descriptive statistics on the time to disposition for cases disposed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parishes	Time to disposition (days)							
	Average	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Minimum	Maximum	Sample size (N)
Corporate Area Civil Division	277.32	119	160	350.83	3.66	1	2955	1821
St. Catherine	700.45	1646	461	653.41	1.20	1	3564	3199
St. James	229.19	28	112	313.61	2.77	1	2817	621
Clarendon	200.09	63	153.50	176.90	1.49	2	1008	556
Westmoreland	247.63	216	188	287.91	2.91	3	2295	797
St. Ann	381.99	63	145	636.49	3.96	1	5720	1107
St. Thomas	318.51	28	119	482.63	3.00	1	2955	333
Portland	515.78	63	185.50	730.55	2.20	2	3400	304
St. Mary	134.68	42	56	277.06	6.79	1	3528	379
Trelawny	209.81	63	73	340.61	2.63	2	1645	274
Total/Weighted Average	424.97	233.10	165.30	425.00	3.06	1.50	2988.70	939.10
Standard Deviation	170.97	499.55	112.74	188.81	1.56	0.71	1268.97	925.44
Skewness	1.42	3.09	2.28	0.55	1.51	1.18	0.70	1.96

Number of charges sampled (N) = 9,391

The table above shows the descriptive statistics on a sample of matters disposed for each parish court in the 2023/2024 fiscal year ended March 31, 2024. The output produces an estimated overall weighted average time taken to dispose of matters in the parish courts (Civil Division) of approximately 425 days. The skewness of these times to disposition is a positive 1.42, suggesting that most of the scores were below the overall mean. For matters disposed of in the period, the parish courts of St. Mary (135 days), Clarendon (200 days) and Trelawny (210 days) took the lowest times on average to dispose of cases over the period. The parish courts of St. Catherine (700 days), Portland (516 days) and St. Ann (382 days) demonstrate the highest times to disposition for matters disposed over the period of analysis. The average variation among the times to disposition across the parish courts is shown to be modest, as conferred by the standard deviation of 170.94. The average minimum time taken to dispose of matters across all parish courts was 1.50 days; however, the average maximum times are substantially larger.

These results are both a reflection of the relative complexity of cases entering open court over the period as well as the relative strength of case management across the various parish courts. The maximum times to disposition in the sample ranged from a low of 1008 days (33.6 months/2.8 years) in the Clarendon Parish Court, to a high of 5,720 days (190.7 months/15.9 years) in the St. Ann Parish Court. The overall skewness of the maximum times to disposition is a positive 0.70, which is an indication that most of the maximum times to disposition were below the series mean. The sample size used to compute these descriptive data was a substantial and representative 9,391 matters.

6.0 Methods of Disposition

Table 6.1: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Struck Out	Consent	Settlement	Default Judgment	Oral Admission	Withdrawal	Notice of Discontinuance (NOD)	Other	Total
St. Catherine	2175	421	493	298	60	242	240	254	4183
Corporate Area Civil	1634	724	56	192	193	382	208	365	3754
Westmoreland	223	173	69	116	97	46	45	88	857
Clarendon	488	133	116	73	54	33	54	114	1065
Trelawny	55	99	27	77	49	22	2	62	393
Portland	50	55	47	20	-	12	78	112	374
St. Mary	240	116	27	61	92	41	8	55	640
St. Thomas	76	102	40	66	95	1	71	48	499
St. Ann	241	478	220	237	141	101	154	110	1682
St. James	119	102	38	241	159	182	52	80	973
Total	5301	2403	1133	1381	940	1062	912	1288	14420
Percentage of total	36.76	16.66	7.86	9.58	6.52	7.36	6.32	8.93	-

Number of charges sampled (N): 14,420

The above table shows a sampling distribution of the methods of disposition across all parish courts-civil division for the first the 2023/2024 fiscal year. From the sample, it is observed that the highest proportion of matters disposed of during the fiscal year were by being struck out with 36.76% of the sample, followed by matters disposed by consent with 16.66%, default judgments with 9.58% and dispositions grouped under the category, “other methods” with 8.93% of the sample. Settlements with 7.86% and withdrawals with 7.36% rank next. Oral admissions with 6.52% and Notices of Discontinuance (NOD) with 6.32% account for the remaining disposals in the fiscal year.

7.0 Civil Case Backlog

7.1 Net and gross civil case backlog as at the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Net Case Backlog Rate (%)	Gross Case Backlog Rate (%)
Clarendon	0.89	12.03
Corporate Area	2.16	27.89
Portland	4.38	22.92
St. Ann	3.19	25.39
St. Catherine	2.50	5.34
St. James	3.45	7.21
St. Mary	2.27	17.45
St. Thomas	1.35	24.05
Trelawny	1.50	24.44
Westmoreland	3.09	16.18
Weighted Average	2.38	19.61
Standard Deviation	1.07	7.96

Note: The net backlog for the Browns Town Outstation in St. Ann for the 2023/2024 fiscal year is 2.38% and the gross backlog is 19.61%

The net and gross case backlog rates provide one of the most decisive indicators of court performance as they are strongly influenced by most of the other critical court performance metrics such as the case clearance, case disposal, trial and hearing date certainty rates and are also directly correlated with the case congestion rate. The estimated gross case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases filed for a given period (of over two years) which are either active or inactive (i.e. are unresolved) and are over two years old at the date of reporting. The closely related estimated net case backlog rate is the proportion of all cases filed for a given period (of over two years) which are still active and exceeding two years old at the time of reporting. The estimated net case backlog rate therefore excludes inactive cases which are unresolved. Based on international best practices an estimated gross case backlog rate of under 10% is desirable, while an estimated net case backlog rate of under 5% is prescribed. The results revealed a net case backlog rate (weighted average) in the parish courts of 2.38% (with a standard deviation of 1.07%), which is satisfies than the international standard.

The estimated gross case backlog rate also stands at 19.61% (with a standard deviation of 7.96%), an indication that there are a large number of inactive unresolved cases in the parish courts. This rate is 9.61 percentage points higher than the prescribed rate of 10% but can be improved to meet this standard with the application of more aggressive case management practices and reduction in the incidence of delays in the civil courts. The sample set is large and representative of the current direction of the court system. The parish courts of Clarendon with an estimated net backlog rate of 0.89%, St. Thomas with an estimated net backlog rate of 1.35% and Trelawny with an estimated net backlog rate of 1.50% have the lowest (best) estimated net case backlog rate in the time series, while the parish courts of Portland (4.38%), St. James (3.45%) and St. Ann (3.19%) have the highest rates. As for the estimated gross backlog rate, the parish courts of St. Catherine (5.34%), St. James (7.21%) and Clarendon (12.03%) have the lowest (best) estimated gross backlog rates in the series, while the parish courts of Corporate Area-Civil Division (27.89%), St. Ann (25.39%) and Trelawny (24.44%) have the highest rates.

8.0 Trial Court Activity Summary

Table 8.1: Time interval between major events for cases that had a trial date in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Average time between filing and first court appearance	Average time between first court appearance and trial	Average time between trial and disposition
Clarendon	49.76	200.81	204.40
Corporate Area-Civil Division	119.58	262.26	262.03
Portland	70.07	625.27	492.79
St. Ann	97.83	531.26	757.11
St. Catherine	86.19	455.16	470.70
St. James	53.64	501.37	141.00
St. Mary	70.42	137.54	233.65
St. Thomas	46.98	509.20	546.68
Trelawny	55.75	248.38	233.85
Westmoreland	36.66	78.15	87.56
Weighted Average	78.62	380.27	407.18
Standard Deviation	25.82	190.62	212.76

Tracking the times between the occurrence of major hearing events along the case flow continuum is important to establishing precise points of possible delay in case progression. The above table provides a summary of the average times between filing a case and the first court appearance. The average time between the first court appearance and the first date of trial and the average duration between the first trial date and disposition. Overall, it is seen that the average time between filing a civil case and the first court appearance is roughly 2.6 months, while the overall average time between first appearance of a civil matter in the parish courts and the first trial date is, however, much longer at roughly 12.7 months 380 days. The average duration between the first trial date set and the date of disposition is roughly 13.6 months or 407 days. These findings indicate that there may be imprecisions in the science of scheduling trial dates which may at times face long delays after a first date set is postponed.

Since less than a quarter of civil cases filed in the parish courts will proceed to trial, these findings may not have a dramatic impact on the overall time to disposition of civil cases.

Table 8.2: Trial court activity summary during the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Number of cases heard	Number of cases with a trial date set	Percentage of cases heard which had a trial date set (%)
Clarendon	1481	287	19.38
Corporate Area	6721	490	7.29
Portland	514	144	28.02
St. Ann	2927	392	13.39
St. Catherine	5395	1126	20.87
St. James	2114	166	7.85
St. Mary	767	119	15.51
St. Thomas	859	165	19.21
Trelawny	825	129	15.64
Westmoreland	1002	319	31.84
Total/Weighted Average	22605	3337	14.76

The above table provides a summary of number of cases heard in the 2023/2024 fiscal year in the civil divisions of the parish courts. Using a sampling distribution, it is seen that of 22,605 civil cases heard across the parish courts in the 2023/2024 fiscal year, 3,337 or 14.76% proceeded to trial. The parish courts of the Corporate Area-Civil Division (7.29%), St. James (7.85%) and St. Ann (13.39%) had the lowest proportion of cases proceeding to trial, while the parish courts of Westmoreland (31.84%), Portland (28.02%) and St. Catherine (20.87%) had the highest proportion.

Table 8.3: Distribution of methods of disposition for matters set for trial during the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Struck Out	422	18.78
Consent	273	12.15
Default Judgement	243	10.81
Transferred	242	10.77
Settlement	241	10.73
Notice of Discontinuance (NOD)	191	8.50
Trial	156	6.94
Withdrawal	148	6.59
Judgment	132	5.87
Non Suited	78	3.47
Not Guilty Plea - Mediated Settlement	39	1.74
Oral Admission	35	1.56
Other	31	1.38
Dismissal	11	0.49
Application For Plaintiff Denied	3	0.13
Order	2	0.09
Total	2247	100.00

The above table summarizes the common methods of disposition for a sample of cases proceeding to trial. It is seen that matters struck out with 18.78% of the cases disposed, matters disposed by consent with 273 or 12.15% and matters disposed by default judgments with 243 or 10.81% account for the three leading methods of disposition in the sample.

9.0 Case Management Date

Table 9.1: Summary of case management date frequency for the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Average number of appearances per case	Standard Deviation of the number appearances per case	Skewness of the number of appearances per case	Maximum number of appearances per case	Minimum number of appearances per case
Clarendon	2.82	2.22	1.72	12	1
Corporate Area-Civil Division	2.28	2.17	3.41	21	1
Portland	7.64	7.38	1.41	31	1
St. Ann	4.47	5.90	3.22	40	1
St. Catherine	4.50	3.40	1.10	20	1
St. James	2.55	2.30	1.97	16	1
St. Mary	3.37	3.90	3.27	37	1
St. Thomas	6.90	11.05	2.08	38	1
Trelawny	3.42	3.93	2.82	27	1
Westmoreland	2.84	3.44	3.62	35	1
Total/Weighted Average	3.54	-	-	27.70	1.00
Standard Deviation	1.84	-	-	9.98	0.00
Skewness	1.19	-	-	-0.29	0.00

The above table summarizes the number of case management dates per case heard in the 2023/2024 fiscal year, which have at least one case management date. The overall average number of case management dates per 10 cases mentioned is 35 or approximately 4 dates per case with a standard deviation of 1.84 across the courts sampled and a skewness of 1.19. Together, these results suggest that the average number of case management dates per case is within the prescribed international standard, that a slightly larger proportion of cases have less than the overall average number of case management dates and that there is not on average a wide variation in the number of case management dates per case across the courts.

Among the parish courts with the highest number of case management dates per cases for matters heard in the 2023/2024 fiscal year are the Portland (7.64), St. Thomas (6.90) and St. Catherine (4.50) Parish Courts, while Corporate Area Civil (2.28), St. James (2.55) and Clarendon (2.82) were among the courts with the lowest mean case management dates.

Table 9.2: Summary of the average case management dates for cases disposed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Average number of appearances per case	Standard Deviation
Clarendon	2.13	1.39
Corporate Area-Civil Division	2.37	2.22
Portland	7.01	6.74
St. Ann	3.87	4.92
St. Catherine	4.19	3.34
St. James	2.72	1.93
St. Mary	2.96	3.73
St. Thomas	3.07	4.43
Trelawny	3.51	4.04
Westmoreland	2.52	2.85
Weighted Average	3.25	-

The above summary specifically addresses the number of case management dates per case for matters disposed of in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. The overall average observed is approximately 33 dates for every 10 cases disposed, not dissimilar to the findings from the previous table which provided a descriptive summary of appearances for all cases disposed. The Clarendon, Corporate Area Civil and Westmoreland Parish Courts were among those with the lowest number of case management dates per disposed case in the fiscal year, while the parish courts of Portland, St. Catherine and St. Ann were among the locations with the highest incidence.

10.0 Key Performance Indicators for the Civil Divisions of the Parish Courts for the Fiscal Year 2023 /2024

Table 10.1: Critical performance summaries for the civil division of the parish courts in the fiscal year 2023/2024 ended March 31, 2024

Parish Court	Approx. # of New Cases	Approx. # of Disposed cases and inactive cases (of those originating in the year)	Approx. # of disposed and inactive cases (regardless of year of origin)	Gross Disposal Rate (%)	Net Disposal Rate (%)	Gross Clearance Rate (%)	Net Clearance Rate (%)	Approx. Trial Date Certainty Rate (%)	Overall Avg. Time to Disposition (months)
St. Thomas	617	433	619	70.18	59.91	100.32	96.95	86.11	10.62
Corporate Area-Civil	3972	2278	4391	57.35	47.70	110.55	102.69	NA	9.24
St. Elizabeth	1298	390	1084	30.05	29.72	83.51	83.36	NA	NA
Hanover	462	330	677	71.43	69.44	146.54	134.26	NA	NA
Manchester	1359	366	1102	NA	26.93	NA	81.09	NA	NA
Portland	290	144	292	49.66	45.11	100.69	95.49	48.04	17.19
St. Ann	1622	996	1916	61.41	48.43	118.13	104.70	96.48	12.73
St. Catherine	2355	1307	3465	55.50	53.07	147.13	148.05	67.92	23.35
St. Mary	563	373	543	66.25	65.95	96.45	96.42	42.53	4.49
Trelawny	555	354	564	63.78	49.37	101.62	89.17	76.09	6.99
St. James	1391	975	1472	70.09	49.14	105.82	92.91	92.40	7.64
Clarendon	1070	708	1006	66.17	63.32	94.02	92.50	72.04	6.67
Westmoreland	720	576	806	80.00	76.28	111.94	107.58	99.69	8.25
Total/Weighted Average	16274	9230	17937	56.72	49.18	110.22	105.18	78.46	14.17
Skewness	1.87	1.90	1.78	-1.33	-0.26	1.12	1.56	-0.56	1.42
Standard Deviation	1000.59	576.45	1223.62	12.87	14.41	19.52	19.20	20.41	5.70

Note 1: Corporate Area Court-Civil division clearance and disposal rates was calculated using only new big claims filed in the year.

Note 2: The gross case disposal rate for the Browns Town outstation in St. Ann for the 2023/2024 fiscal year is 40.47% and the net case disposal rate is 25.07%.

Note 3: The gross case clearance rate for the Browns Town outstation in St. Ann for the 2023/2024 fiscal year is 83.51% and the net case clearance rate is 66.85%.

The table presents a comprehensive summary of case management statistics across various parish courts, highlighting key performance indicators such as disposal rates, clearance rates, trial date certainty, and average time to disposition. The gross disposal rate across the courts averaged 56.72%, with notable variations.

Westmoreland recorded the highest gross disposal rate at 80.00%, while St. Elizabeth posted the lowest at 30.05%. The net disposal rate averaged 49.18%, indicating that a significant proportion of disposed cases originated in previous fiscal years.

Clearance rates, which measure the ratio of disposed cases to new cases filed, displayed an average gross clearance rate of 110.22%, signifying that most courts handled more cases than were filed within the fiscal year. Hanover led in gross clearance with 146.54%, showcasing exceptional capacity in addressing both new and backlog cases. Conversely, St. Elizabeth had the lowest clearance rates (gross: 83.51%, net: 83.36%) among the courts analysed.

Trial date certainty, reflecting how often trials proceed as scheduled, showed an average rate of 78.46% across reporting courts, with Westmoreland achieving the highest certainty at 99.69%. Average time to disposition varied significantly, ranging from 4.49 months in St. Mary to 23.35 months in St. Catherine, with a weighted average of 14.17 months.

Conclusion

The Civil Division of the Parish Courts continued its commendable performance trend in the 2023/2024 fiscal year, achieving exceptional results across key metrics. Among its most notable accomplishments was attaining a gross case clearance rate of 110.22%, meeting international standards. This achievement contributed to a reduction in the net case backlog rate for cases older than two years to approximately 2.38%, a figure comparable to that of the Criminal Division. These results reflect minimal disparities between the two divisions regarding backlog management. Additionally, the Civil Division's gross backlog rate stood at 19.61%, aligning closely with the Criminal Division.

Standout performers during the period included the Parish Courts of Hanover and Westmoreland, which excelled on most key performance indicators. Notably, nine parish courts exceeded a gross case clearance rate of 100% for civil matters, with St. Catherine and Hanover surpassing the ambitious 130% target.

Despite these achievements, challenges remain. The average time to dispose of cases was 14.17 months in the fiscal year, underscoring the need for ongoing efforts to reduce delays. A significant contributor to these delays is the frequency of unnecessary adjournments, which require targeted operational reforms and court-driven actions. While some causes of adjournments, such as “No Return/Re-Issued,” the absence of defendants, parties in discussion, and the absence of both parties, are beyond the courts' direct control, their impact must be mitigated through effective strategies.

Under the leadership of the Honourable Chief Justice of Jamaica, the judiciary continues to advance a purposeful, data-driven reform agenda. The achievements within the 2023/2024 fiscal year provide a strong foundation for meeting and potentially exceeding strategic targets, positioning Jamaica's judiciary among the world's best. This progress underscores the commitment, of the Judiciary of Jamaica, to creating a world-class judicial system that ensures timely and effective justice for all stakeholders.

Trial date certainty remains a critical area for improvement. The relationship between consistent scheduling and shorter case disposition times highlights the importance of enhancing adherence to trial dates. Targeted interventions, such as optimizing resources and processes in courts with lower disposal and clearance rates, can help address disparities and sustain high-performing courts.

The Civil Division of the Parish Courts has made significant strides toward achieving its strategic objectives. Continued focus on reducing delays, improving trial date adherence, and addressing disparities between courts will be essential for sustaining and building on this progress. The Judiciary of Jamaica remains steadfast in its commitment to excellence and innovation in delivering justice.

Glossary of Statistical Terms

Clearance rate: The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is $110/100$ or 110%.

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the Court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court systemⁱ.

Disposal rate: As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

Note: A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court systemⁱⁱ.

Trial/hearing date certainty: This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%.

The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

Courtroom utilization rate: The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis.

The international standard for this rate is 100%.

Case congestion rate: The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate.

The international benchmark for casefile integrity is 100%.

Standard deviation: This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are around the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

Outlier: An outlier is a value that is either too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

Skewness: This is a measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is an approximately equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

Range: This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition. The gross backlog rate measures the proportion of all cases filed within a given period which remain unresolved for a period of over two years (both active and inactive cases).

The net backlog rate on the other hand measures the proportion of active cases filed in a given period which are unresolved for over two years.

Percentile Rank: This refers to the percentage of scores that are equal to or less than a given score. Percentile ranks, like percentages, fall on a continuum from 0 to 100. For example, a percentile rank of 45 indicates that 45% of the scores in a distribution of scores fall at or below the score at the 45th percentile. Percentile ranks are useful when you want to quickly understand how a particular score compares to the other scores in a distribution of scores. For instance, knowing a court disposed 300 cases in a given period doesn't tell you much. You don't know how many case disposals were possible, and even if you did, you wouldn't know how that court's score compared to the rest of the courts.

If, however, you were told that the court scored at the 80th percentile, then you would know that this court did as well or better than 80% of the courts in case disposals.

Difference between percentage and percentage points: The difference between percentage and percentage points, the latter is strictly used to compare two percentages, for example, if the clearance rate in 2018 was 89% and the clearance rate in 2019 is 100%, then the appropriate expression to compare these would be "an 11 percentage points increase". However, if we are comparing two absolute numbers, say, 1000 cases were disposed in 2018, and 1500 in 2019, then there would be a 50% increase in cases disposed.

Weighted Average: Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court.

A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

Continuance and Adjournment: In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment.

However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment.' Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons.

For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates, but continuances do not.

Exponential Smoothing: Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older the data, the less priority ("weight") the data is given; newer data is seen as more relevant and is assigned more weight. Smoothing parameters (smoothing constants) - usually denoted by α - determine the weights for observations.

Exponential smoothing is usually used to make short-term forecasts, as longer-term forecasts using this technique can be quite unreliable.

- Simple (single) exponential smoothing uses a weighted moving average with exponentially decreasing weights.
- Holt's trend-corrected double exponential smoothing is usually more reliable for handling data that shows trends, compared to the single procedure.
- Triple exponential smoothing (also called the Multiplicative Holt-Winters) is usually more reliable for parabolic trends or data that shows trends and seasonality.

ⁱ Source :

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRate.s.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Source :

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRate>