

State Advisory Council Meeting

April 2024 – Virtual via TEAMS

Members Present: Chair Rochelle Beley, Ben Davis, Julie Fleck, Julie Burk, Jill Burgan, Bonnie Bear Don't Walk, Christy Hendricks, Carrie Krepps, Megan Bailey, Adam Larsen, April Barnings and Mike Burke

NEW MEMBERS: Shanell LaVallie (new Teacher and Educator in Great Falls, also with the Indian Child Welfare Program), Arielle Cowser (new from First Judicial District Court), and Stacie Eckenstein (new from CHAFEE)

CFSD Representatives Present: Brandi Loch, Nikki Grossberg, Courtney Callaghan, Theresa Becker, Deb Cole, Natalie BahnMiller, Eric Barnosky, Sahrita Jessee-Jones, Jennifer Blodgett, Autumn Beattie, Mick Leary, Laura Mccullough

Guests: Jaime Robison, Ashley O'Bryan, Mary Wolf, Lona Gregor-Martin, Mackenzie Forbis, Kaci Gaub-Bruno

Absent:

9:00-9:15am Opening – Call to Order. Affirm new members.

- Chair Rochelle Beley called the meeting to order at 9:00am on April 19, 2024, virtually on TEAMS. Everyone introduced themselves.
- A motion to accept Shanell LaVallie, Arielle Cowser and Stacie Eckenstein as new members by Meagan Bailey and seconded by Ben Davis. All approved to accept the three new members.
- A motion made by Christy Hendricks and seconded by Megan Bailey to approve the minutes of January 19, 2024, as submitted. The minutes of January 19, 2024, were approved.

9:15-9:25am Partnering with individuals (Mike Burke and Mary Wolf)

9:25-9:35am Overview of Draft Charter and Chartering Process (Megan Bailey and Mike Burke of The Center of States.

At the meeting on January 19, 2024, Brandi had asked for those who were interested to join the subcommittee group so they could work on the Charter. What came out of that meeting was people wanted a little more direction on where the State Advisory Council is going and what each role is about within the State Advisory Council.

9:35-9:55am Charter Discussion in Small Groups

The Meeting Objectives are:

- Welcome new members,
- Review and finalize the team charter in order to provide a deeper understanding of the role of the State Advisory Council and collaborating partners in child welfare planning and implementation,
- Identify opportunities for meaningful and collaborative engagement between Child and Family Services and our community partners.

9:55-10:15am Charter Agreements and Next Steps (Megan and Brandi)

The members on this charter group (Rochelle Beley, Megan Bailey, Judge Ashley Harada) presented the outcome of the Charter. Everyone divided into small groups to make sure the Council agrees with moving forward. Mike Burke and his crew from Center States discussed some of the federal planning and assessment pieces that are coming up. Megan Bailey discussed the State Advisory Council Charter Agreement. This charter provides a foundation for the Councils work and is useful in orienting new members as part of the onboard process.

Team Charge

- Create a SAC structure that lets others know how decisions are made by making sure communication and feedback loops are established and used by providing a clear agenda for the work,
- Serve as the CAPTA Citizen review panel,
- Identify barriers, limitations and comments,
- Structure and Communication,
- The SAC will identify co-leads to act as meeting facilitators, set agendas for meetings and to keep communication alive between and among members,
- The SAC will review current by-laws and determine what role the by-laws will play in the future of SAC.

Draft Charter Small Group Discussion

- What should be added, modified or removed,
- Can it easily be understood by others,
- Need a recorder and a reporter,
- Is the language used inclusive?
- Do the elements you are reviewing resonate with you?
- The mission of the SAC will provide a space for professionals from across the child welfare system and those with lived experience to improve engagement across these systems.

The SAC will develop and regularly review procedures for building confidentiality agreements, which include the percentage of active members required to constitute a quorum, what we need to approve a vote, what are the expectations of membership, a removal and replacement of active members, consent based decision making and also set up and regularly review channels for communication.

Each breakout group will send their notes to Brandi who will have it finalized for the next SAC meeting.

10:15am – 10:25am Break

10:30am-10:45am

- **Understanding Federal Planning and Assessment Process**

This is a plan that every state has to put together for a five-year look at what the vision, goals and objectives are, what needs to be done and engage with the various individuals and groups who are involved with the system either directly affecting it or to being supported. Right now, the State is in the end stage of the current Child & Family Service plan which ran through this year and then building the new Child and Family Service

plan 2025 through 2029 federal fiscal year which starts in October and ends in September of each year. During the plan years, the state must give an update on all the goals and objectives they want to achieve.

- **Importance of Collaboration with Community Partners**

One of the main issues is with tribal communities and tribal children. The Children's Bureau has four primary priorities:

- Creating an equitable child welfare system,
- Preventing foster care,
- Ensuring that youth exiting the foster care system leave with strength, holistic support and opportunities, and
- Ensuring young people who leave care at age 18 have the skills and experiences in order to live on their own.

- **Your Role –**

- Provide support and activities that set the foundation for meaningful and authentic engagement,
- Safety and well being with a healthy development permanency and success,
- Transitions, prevention, and protection including short and long term focused interventions aimed at meeting the family's needs and children's best interests,
- Timeliness, flexibility, coordination, accessibility to families and individuals delivered mainly in the home,
- Service continuum that is designed around measurable, achievable and measurable outcomes,
- Community-based services with residents, families involved in residents and sufficient intensity and duration to keep children safe and to meeting family needs,
- How to ensure that we keep children in their home and strengthen the families. If they have to be removed, how can we make sure they achieve permanency?

11:15-11:45am

Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Engagement and Collaboration between and among CFSD and Community Partners

Montana Child Welfare Advisory Committee's Environmental Scan forms who is here, who needs to be here and who needs to be invited.

Everyone filled out the Environmental Scan form instead of going into a small group:

- Who is well represented?
- Who is minimally or not represented? Tribes and parents, former foster parents, human resources, parents with lived experience?
- Who needs to be invited to the table?
- How will we invite them to the table?

11:45-12 noon Next steps and Formal Closing

Next steps:

- Mike Burke suggested to Brandy about putting together a document asking folks to join the Charter regarding what kind of time commitment they would be looking at, why are they being asked, and what is the focus,
- Child and Family Services review for Montana will take place the first full week in August 2025,

- Family services current 5-year plan that is currently in process and due June 30, 2024,
- Mike Burke gave an overview of the federal reports that are due. The goal of the reports is to monitor our child welfare system in Montana and make sure that we are doing everything we are required by the federal government and setting goals that are needed to improve our system and the lives of those who are involved,
- The need for tribal representation,
- Draft of some surveys and small group opportunities for all to be a part of,
- Data collection on children, families and community specific,
- Collecting data provided by the federal government to the state of Montana twice a year that outlines some of the areas where Montana is doing well and areas where we could use improvement to focus on as an agency,
- For those involved over the past year and a half, SAC focused on permanency for children so that we can make sure we are addressing permanency from the moment a child and family enters the foster care system until the end,
- Montana is in the middle of undergoing a selection process and creation of a whole new case management system for our staff and tribal people,
- Correspondence will be sent out by Brandi to invite everyone to review the next five-year plan and for the next review.

No public comment.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 19 In-Person from 8:30am-3:00pm.

State Advisory Council adjourned at 11:45am