

State Advisory Council Meeting

July 23, 2021 - 8:30am to 10:30am

111 North Last Chance Gulch – Zoom Video Conference Call

Present: Chairwoman Edith Clark, April Sommers, Brenda Schye, Dana Toole, Greg Daly, Heather Denny, Ken Holmlund, Melissa Lavinder, Randall Spaulding, Rochelle Beley, Trudi Schmidt, Megan Bailey

CFSD Representatives Present: Nikki Grossberg, Marti Vining, Mick Leary, Jason Larson, Jennifer Hoerauf, Sahrita Jones-Jesse, Lynne Johnston, Laura McCullough, Cindy Dufner

Guests: Gala Goodwin, Sue O’Connell, Liz Flynn, Kaci Gaub-Bruno, Lisa Evers, Sue O’Connell

Absent: Angie Rolando, Effie Benoit, Eric Barnosky, Brandon Wootan, Carrie Krepps, Julie Burk, Julie Fleck, Lisa Goff, Loretta Rex, Mercedes Oxford Kemp, Randy Schwickert, Traci Perez, Wayne Phillips

8:30 – 8:40am **Welcome, Introductions and Approve Minutes**

Chairwoman Edith Clark called the meeting to order at 8:35am. Marti Vining asked everyone to introduce themselves. Quorum was reached. Edith asked for a motion to approve the April 23, 2021 minutes. Trudi motioned to approve and Rochelle Beley seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

8:40 – 9:00am **CFSD Update – Marti Vining**

Marti reminded everyone that she has been on medical leave for the past month. The Wellness Survey will be sent out to all CFSD staff. Director Adam Meier feels it is important to get input from workers in the field on how their health and wellness can be improved. In the past 10 days, we have been working with the University of Kentucky, Child Welfare Force, for the basis of our Wellness Survey. A consulting firm, Alvarez & Marsal, will analyze the data collected. When we get the results back, we will know how the staff feels on how this work impacts them.

We held our third “Moving the Dial Summit”. This program works within our regional systems with our judges, public defenders, county attorneys, CASAs, GALS, etc. by addressing child welfare issues and breaking down data within each of the regions. The topic at the last meeting was on concurrent planning and how important it is to have a plan for the kids from the very beginning of a case. We don’t want to have the kids lingering in foster care. We had Judge Ashley Wilcott from Georgia do a presentation on concurrent planning. This approach of breaking down into teams within our state is very cutting edge and exciting to the children’s bureau and everyone involved. This will impact children welfare. It is going to take all of us working together with a strategic focus to move forward.

HB503, which is the EPS five-day hearings, moved forward. Public Defender’s office reports that there have been eight or nine requested hearings from birth parents since July 1. Billings and Kalispell continuing to be a pilot, and all families in Billings are having EPS hearings. All judges, except two, are having EPS hearings. We are working with the Public Defender’s office and County Attorneys to address matters as they come up. Focusing on HB459 provides certification and will move forward. It should be implemented by October 1, 2023.

9:00-9:10am

Program Bureau update – Mick Leary

Things are going good within the bureau. There are a couple vacancies within some adoption incorporators. They take all the adoption records that come in from the field, put them together in a specific order, then send to storage to be kept indefinitely. Central Office has moved to the Arcade Building on the Walking Mall from Park Avenue Building. Major projects such as budgets were passed at end of state fiscal year, June 30. We received the Prevention Plan back from the Feds. We had a meeting with Region 8 in Denver and have received feedback on what should be added to the plan. The plan should be approved within the next 6-8 weeks. PIP is in their last quarter handling data collection. Overall, everything is going well.

9:10-9:40am

Reports by Regional Administrators

Region 1: Cindy Dufner reporting for Eric Barnosky

- Family Support Teams are ongoing with 2.5 per week. We incorporate the Prevention Family Support team when we don't have immediate danger. Families need a wrap-around of services of what may be going on with the family.
- A new Family Engagement Coordinator was hired.
- 67 FEM meetings from following up from FST meetings.
- Completed commercial sexual exploitation training with 170 in attendance on June 22.
- Two open positions available in Hardin and CPS worker from Miles City office who has agreed to run referrals each week.
- Field Lead Training specialist has support coming in every other week.
- Intensive Service unit worked closely with Wendy's placed kiddos and finding families.
- Retention and recruitments working out well as a team

Region 2: Sahrita Jones-Jessee

- Great Falls has had two EPS hearings so far. Pre-Hearing conferences have been going on for three months now.
- County attorney's office now has fully trained Josie Ray. Val Winfield takes 50 percent of the workload and Josie Ray takes the other 50 percent.
- Great Falls had two trainings - QEW TRAINING brought a lot of tribes and ICWA trainings had 40 staff members in attendance
- Community Outreach – went to Green Apple Counseling to train them on our process. Also trained Family Connections and Alliance For Youth.
- Child Bridge reached out for a day of service. They cleaned all our vehicles and donated 12 employee recognition gift bags.
- Conrad office is fully staffed. Training new supervisor.
- Havre has two openings. Got permission to advertise in newspaper.
- Great Falls has three CPS openings with interviews this week. Hired a full time Safety Resource Specialist to carry the eight Prevention Plan caseloads.

Marti mentioned there are plans for Community Planning trainings and meetings in the regions sometime in late fall. Marti would like everyone to attend if possible. Information will be sent out in the near future for everyone.

Dana Toole discussed Safety Science Training returning to CFSD. There were efforts years ago to get it out across the state.

Marti discussed the QEW and ICWA training. Would like to move the trainings outside of Helena to the different tribal regions closer to the reservations. The first one was in Havre by Rocky Boy and Fort Belknap and the second one was in Great Falls. Marti would like Lisa Evers to continue to attend the trainings. Mick mentioned that the CIP group is working with Salish to have the next meeting in that area.

Region 3: Jason Larson

- Three judges are hearing cases on Tuesday and Thursday. Six of the eight judges want to do their own hearings. Judge Davies has a subcommittee on how that can be handled. In places like Billings, judges take their cases back so if a case was dismissed and then re-enters, they try to keep that family within that judicial courtroom.
- OPD (Office of Public Defenders) has lost some attorneys in the Billings area
- Family Support Teams have been going well since last December
- ICWA Court had two grant funded positions (Judge Todd and Sousa) that hired internally.
- Vacancies – fully staffed in 6 counties. Billings has 8 vacancies, 7 of them being CPS positions. Should be up and going by late Fall.

Region 4: Jennifer Hoerauf and Laura McCullough

- Trying to get training and start implementing Pre-hearing conferences under Judge Burger's courtroom.
- One of the main county attorneys who handles DN cases in Gallatin County has moved on. Working with Deputy County Attorneys in Bozeman in order for everyone to be on the same page.
- In-home plans on getting kids home sooner.
- We are seeing many kids continuing on to the Licensing staff for finalization of permanency.
- Dillon office has one vacancy.
- Laura will take over Centralized Intake soon. Nikki and Laura have been doing some cross training. The last CI Supervisor Transfer Meeting was today. Hotline Centralized Intake will also be at the Arcade Building soon. Helena Office is starting their DN meetings again where they meet with the judges, CASA, OPD, County Attorney and CPS. One CPS and SST position vacancy in Helena will be filled shortly. One position posted in Centralized Intake.

Region 5: Courtney Callaghan

- Less going on right now than normal.
- Family Support team in Missoula is newer than other areas. Have established a routine and good relationship with community partners.
- Expanded Family Support teams from the Missoula county area and picking up Mineral County cases. Rachel Gregory, coordinator.
- Emergency Protective service hearings Missoula County – everyone getting early service hearings. Missoula County decided to run the EPS Hearing differently. Every family is getting that initial hearing but it all goes through one judge and assigned out from there. Of the five judges, Judge

Halligan is the entry point for all the hearings. Then it is moved to a Pre-conference hearing and then to the assigned judge.

- It is still a work in progress to get attorneys assigned. We make sure attorneys are making contact with their clients.
- Everyone is spending more time in the office again since teleworking.
- Mac Church in Missoula Alliance is having a regional BBQ/office event next week for a get to know you time.
- Filed on 41 cases – 29 of 41 are either with a non-custodial parent or with a relative or a family-know person.
- Substance abuse is high, along with the housing instability issue.

Region 6: Marti Vining

- Marti Vining gave update for Angie who has decided to move on as RA and would rather be a frontline social worker by going back into the field. The position has been advertised and should be filled soon.
- The CPS Supervisor position in the Libby/Thompson Falls area has been filled and will start August 2
- Kalispell pilot site started by having one judge handling EPS hearing on Wednesdays. Then all the judges agreed that all four judges would handle the hearings.
- ICWA Training by Lisa Evers and Sahrita hosting the meetings.
- Three tribes attended the QEW training.

9:40-9:50am

Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and FFPSA (Families First) – Nikki Grossberg

- Families First Prevention Services Act has partnered with AMD. One cohort is in training this week trying to increase the number of mental health providers who are trained in this model. There are a variety of individual providers across the state and train with their agencies. The next cohort is in October with the possibility of a third cohort. Nikki will be getting this information out to the Management Team so everyone will be aware of the therapist in their area who are being trained in this model.
- There is a group of people under the Child Abuse Montana Chapter. Will include other divisions. Currently, Watson's Children's Shelter is the one agency in Montana that handles Health Families America. The chapter has put in for a grant through the Montana Healthcare Foundation so they may hire a coordinator who will pilot that and get into other areas in order to expand.
- IT System is working on updating CAPS system
- Policy procedures on Prevention Plan
- We have had six regional trainings introducing new procedures for the last 3-4 months. We are in our final six months of implementation. Then a year of measurement and data collections if all of the strategies we have implemented have made changes on what is needed.

The next State Advisory Council meeting will be held at a different location rather than the Arcade Building since the conference room is not large enough to handle this group.

9:50-9:50am

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

9:50-9:55am **Wrap Up/Next Meeting: Chairwoman Edith Clark**

Edith Clark gave her thanks to everyone for their help and support.

Nikki asked if there were any questions.

Ken Holmland asked if there is any information on Cares Act money?

Nikki reported that with ARCA money for the ones that impacted champion services was per capita. We put a proposal together from the tool from DOJ. There is always more demand for money than what there is available. Ken would like to be kept updated on the Cares Act money.

Megan Bailey asked if we are able to look at leveraging some of the workforce development or training monies over to the department? Nikki said that is one of the things that we did consider. Ken Holmland said there is no way to move the monies. Megan would like funding to go to the shortages. Ken said this is one-time funding and we need to stay away from wages funding which would be an on-going expense. Megan thought it could be used for training.

Nikki Grossberg said the next State Advisory Council meeting has not been set yet but will be in October and should be in person. Invite will be sent out for next meeting as soon as a decision has been made on the actual date.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55am