

Nebraska Children’s Commission
 Forty-Second Meeting
 January 18, 2017
 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
 Southeast Community College, Rooms V103 &104
 8800 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68520

I. Call to Order

The Nebraska Children’s Commission Chairperson, Beth Baxter, called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Commission Members present (13):

Karen Authier	Kim Hawekotte	Susan Thomas
Beth Baxter	Felicia Nelsen	Janine Ucchino
Holly Brandt	David Newell	Kelli Wacker
Jennifer Chrystal-Clark	Deb O’Brien	
Vernon Davis	Lisa Story	

Commission Members absent (4):

Teresa Anderson	Paula Wells
Marisa Cummings	Bill Williams

Ex Officio Members present (5):

Michele Borg (9:21)	Julie Rogers	Doug Weinberg
Jeanne Brandner	Deb VanDyke-Ries	

Ex Officio Members absent (5):

Sen. Kate Bolz	Courtney Phillips	Sen. Merve Riepe
Sen. Patty Pansing-Brooks	Judge Linda Porter	

A quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (7):

Doug Beran.....	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Bethany Connor Allen.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Amanda Felton.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Sarah Foreest.....	Office of the Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare
Michelle Graef.....	UNL, Center of children Families and the Law, QIC-WD
Chrissy Tonkinson.....	Voices for Children in Nebraska
Kari Rumbaugh.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Division of Juvenile Services

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Amanda Felton, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar and Nebraska Children’s Commission websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication would be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located on the sign in table near the entrance of the room.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Kim Hawekotte and seconded by Jennifer Chrystal-Clark to approve the agenda as presented with flexibility to accommodate presenter schedules. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Karen Authier	Vernon Davis	Deb O'Brien
Beth Baxter	Kim Hawekotte	Susan Thomas
Holly Brandt	Felicia Nelsen	Janine Uchino
Jennifer Chrystal-Clark	David Newell	Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSENT (5):

Teresa Anderson	Lisa Story	Bill Williams
Marisa Cummings	Paula Wells	

ABSTAINED (0)

MOTION CARRIED

For purposes of the minutes, items will be reflected in order of the agenda.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. *Minutes of the November 15, 2016 Nebraska Children's Commission Meeting*
- b. *Juvenile Services Committee Member Nominations*
 - **Representative Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division** (voting):
 - Jim Bennett, Director of Juvenile Placement
 - Kari Rumbaugh, Assistant Deputy Administrator

It was moved by Vernon Davis and seconded by Deb O'Brien to approve the consent agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Karen Authier	Vernon Davis	Deb O'Brien
Beth Baxter	Kim Hawekotte	Susan Thomas
Holly Brandt	Felicia Nelsen	Janine Uchino
Jennifer Chrystal-Clark	David Newell	Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSENT (5):

Teresa Anderson	Lisa Story	Bill Williams
Marisa Cummings	Paula Wells	

ABSTAINED (0)

MOTION CARRIED

V. Chairperson Report

Chair Baxter took an opportunity to introduce the two new members of the Commission. She welcomed Felicia Nelson, a community representative of the southeast service area, and Lisa Story, a community representative of the northern service area.

The Chair went on to discuss the potential affect the state budget shortfall could have on the Children’s Commission. A hearing for the budget had yet to be set, but the Governor’s proposed budget would fall short of covering staffing costs and would leave no money for Commission operations. Information regarding the budget and hearings would be shared with members as it became available.

VI. Legislation Overview and Legislative Resolution Discussion

a. *LB180 – Provide for bridge orders transferring juvenile court jurisdiction of a juvenile to a district court*

Kim Hawekottee, Chair of the Legal Parties Taskforce under the Commission expanded on the proposed legislation. She explained that the bill stemmed from recommendations from the Taskforce. The bill would clarify the court responsible for the bridge orders regarding parental custody of a child. Should the Commission agree to support this bill, Hawekotte recommended having a member of the Taskforce provide testimony.

b. *LB226 – Provide for purchase of motor vehicles and insurance by certain juveniles, change foster care transition proposal provisions, and provide immunity from liability for caregivers*

This bill identified additional responsibilities for the Normalcy Task Force. This bill would charge the Task Force with investigating the possibility and necessary steps to increase foster youth ability to obtain driver’s licenses and to purchase both motor vehicles and required insurance.

It was moved by Karen Authier and seconded by Kelli Wacker to support and testify on both LB180 and LB226. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Karen Authier
Beth Baxter
Holly Brandt
Jennifer Chrystal-Clark

Vernon Davis
Kim Hawekotte
Felicia Nelsen
David Newell

Deb O’Brien
Susan Thomas
Janine Ucchino
Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSENT (5):

Teresa Anderson
Marisa Cummings

Lisa Story
Paula Wells

Bill Williams

ABSTAINED (0)

MOTION CARRIED

VII. Probation Report

Jeanne Brandner, Deputy Administrator and Kari Rumbaugh, Assistant Deputy Administrator, presented an update on the work of the Juvenile Services Division of Probation. The majority of the update focused on their [2015-2016 Detailed Analysis Report](#). Brandner explained that this first annual report along with the monthly reports would serve as a foundation for future reports.

Rumbaugh touched on several topics of interest from the report. They included the Juvenile Intake numbers, the successes and barriers related to decreased risk assessment overrides, data on the services used, demographics on youth receiving services, and demographics on their out-of-home populations. The presenters highlighted the artwork within the report. The Division had opened up a contest for probation youth to participate in. Ten submissions were received with the artwork of the first and second place winners showcased on the cover of the report. Prizes were given to the top two participants.

Feedback on the report was encouraged to assist in addressing areas of concern in future reports. Brander went on to discuss the hearing for LB8 which would establish a statewide standardized graduated response matrix. Brandner stressed the need for there to be opportunities for youth to be held accountable without pushing them deeper into the system.

VIII. Structure Taskforce Update

Dave Newell gave a brief review of the recommendations from the Structure Taskforce. He highlighted the efforts to coordinate with the various child welfare and juvenile justice groups, with particular focus on the Governor's Commission for the Protection of Children and the Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts. Other updates to the Governance memo included a reduction in meetings, increased use of technology, and the annual reporting of subgroup timelines and goals. Discussion occurred as to when quarterly meetings would occur. The members agreed that quarterly meetings should continue on the third Tuesday of the month during January, April, July, and November.

It was moved by Susan Thomas to accept the Governance and Organization Structure document as presented with the note that quarterly meetings would fall on the third Tuesday of January, April, July, and November of each year. It was seconded by Deb O'Brien. No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Karen Authier
Beth Baxter
Holly Brandt
Jennifer Chrystal-Clark

Vernon Davis
Kim Hawekotte
Felicia Nelsen
David Newell

Deb O'Brien
Susan Thomas
Janine Ucchino
Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSENT (5):

Teresa Anderson
Marisa Cummings

Lisa Story
Paula Wells

Bill Williams

ABSTAINED (0)

MOTION CARRIED

IX. Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare Annual Report Presentation

Inspector General, Julie Rogers, and Assistant Inspector General, Sarah Forrest, provided a review of their [2016 annual report](#) for members. Rogers explained to the group that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of Nebraska Child Welfare had been one of 18 organizations that had been created after the failing of privatization efforts. Their charge was to investigate the death and serious injury of children involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Forrest gave data on the 577 cases received by the OIG in fiscal years 2015-16. She continued by summarizing a several of their cases and reviewing the recommendations provided to DHHS and Probation. She indicated that the OIG regularly checks-in regarding the accepted recommendations to track progress. Members noted that the report had mentioned misinterpretation of information by law enforcement and asked how that could be address for the future. Partnership between the Crime Commission and law enforcement entities would need to happen and training provided.

Another area of focus in the report was the condition of the Kearney Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Center (YRTC). In the period that the facility was without a full time administrator, data measures significantly worsened. With the lack of adequate oversight, youth located in the Dickson unit were not provided the necessary rehabilitation services. Programs and planning had occurred that were unlawful and/or producing negative outcomes for the youth placed at the facility.

The Commission members inquired as to what steps they could take to assist with the recommendations made in the OIG report. Rogers mentioned that one of the largest areas, workforce issues, was already being addressed by the Commission. Other areas that the Commission could assist with included promoting the Alternative Response program as a preventative effort, having the subgroups review the report and take it into

consideration as they form recommendations, and work to spread the word on how we can support DHHS and Probation in tackling areas in need of attention.

X. Foster Care Review Office Annual Report Presentation

The floor was given to Executive Director of the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO), Kim Hawekotte. She directed members to the [FCRO 2016 Annual Report](#). The FCRO had conducted over 4,300 interviews during the fiscal year of 2015-16 which included youth in child welfare, juvenile justice, and in trial home stays. Hawekotte walked through the various data points, indicating that an overall increase of 7% for children placed in out-of-home care.

Areas mentioned that were in need of improvement included the distribution of health care files to foster families upon placement, addressing the low graduation rate for system involved youth, and work to close cases if a youth has reached a safe and stable placement. Hawekotte shared the recommendations from the report. The statistic of ¼ of youth being on psychotropic medication led the group to agree that the Psychotropic Medication Committee should examine the report recommendations surrounding well-being of state wards.

XI. Kids Count Annual Report Presentation

Chrissy Tonkinson, Research Coordinator with Voices for Children in Nebraska, provided a presentation on the [2016 Annual Kids Count Report](#). Tonkinson took a moment to show members where they could access data and information on their [interactive website](#). She went on to review the data included in the report highlighting areas on health, education, economic stability, and an in-depth look at the emerging adult population.

Recommendations discussed from the report emphasized several areas of need. The first being the need to ensure that elements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) relevant to emerging adults were preserved. Other recommendations touched on were to expand supportive services to young adults aging out of the juvenile justice system, working to increase positive outcomes for youth of color, and ensuring that low income and youth of color students receive increased supports within higher education.

XII. Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development Presentation

A presentation on the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) was provided by Project Director, Michelle Graef. She expounded on the challenge faced across the country regarding recruitment and retention of child welfare staff. The University of Nebraska – Lincoln had recently been awarded a grant to participate in a five year cooperative agreement with the Children’s Bureau. The project will look at how to tackle the issues that the child welfare system is facing. Graef went on to explain that in depth examination of intervention will be done to create a database that identifies Evidence Based Practices for workforce intervention issues.

The project was accepting applications for participants to be involved. Selected participants would be assigned an ongoing support network, would form an implementation team, and would be involved in planning for future sustainability. Eligible applicants could be state or county public child welfare agencies or tribal child welfare agencies. Applicants will need to exemplify expertise and willingness to partner in the project. The deadline for applications would be February 18th.

XIII. Lunch

The Committee recessed for lunch at 12:05 p.m.

The meeting resumed business at 12:35 p.m.

XIV. Nebraska Center on Reflective Practice Presentation

Guest presenters, Jennie Cole-Mossman, Kelli Hauptman, and Jamie Bahm from the Center on Reflective Practice provided an informative update for the Commission. Reflective practice is a way of utilizing the experiences of child welfare staff to help them learn to cope and shape their responses to increase personal well-being. It allows for staff to work through their feelings, biases, and vicarious trauma to make better

decisions. While reflective practice doesn't change the way things are viewed, it does adjust how the information is processed by the individual.

Reflective practice was in the beginning stages of implementation with rollout targeting DHHS supervisors, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers, attorneys and other populations that touch the child welfare system. Once the project is completed, a system of trainers will have been established that can continue to train future stakeholders. With the use of reflective practice, the hope is that it will provide the child welfare workforce with the critical thinking necessary to prevent burnout and increase retention.

XV. Department of Health and Human Services Update

An update on the work of the Department of Health and Human Services was given by Doug Weinberg, Director of the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). He touched on the areas of the CFSRs, the requests for proposals for lead agencies, improvements regarding Access Nebraska, and work happening in the Medicaid & Long Term Care, Behavioral Health, Public Health, and Veteran Affairs division.

Weinberg went on to discuss the available service array including the launch of Intensive Family Preservation efforts. Movement has also occurred to address the rising substance abuse problem. As for prevention efforts, Weinberg noted that a small strategic plan would be created around community response in partnership with the first lady, Susanne Shore. The issues with the Kearney YRTC raised under the Inspector General's report were discussed with mention that steps had been taken to address them.

a. Update on Round 3 Children and Family Services Review (CFSR)

A review of the CFSR was provided by Doug Beran, Research, Planning and Evaluation Administrator with the DCFS. Beran indicated that the Division had done well so far, but had plateaued in their scoring for the seven key indicators. An area of continued struggle was achieving permanence for the youth in a timely manner.

The issue of concurrent planning was noted as a hurdle that was proving difficult to overcome. To address the issue, a list was being released to counties identifying youth who had or were about to reach the 9 month marker in out-of-home care with notification that concurrent planning needed to be completed. Beran indicated that it would take a joint effort from all stakeholders to reach the goal of passing all seven indicators.

XVI. Workforce Workgroup Update

Chair of the Workforce Workgroup, Deb VanDyke-Ries gave a summary of the work of the group. Steps in progress included comparisons of salaries in surrounding states, examining current and necessary training requirements, connecting with private schools of social work, and research on the history of caseworker job descriptions and salary incentives. VanDyke-Ries also indicated that the Juvenile Standards Subcommittee of the Supreme Court Commission for Children in the Court may also have relevant data that she could share with the Commission at the next meeting.

XVII. Public Comment

Tom McBride, Director of the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association introduced himself and his interning practicum student, Beau Stallings.

XVIII. New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

XIX. Upcoming Meeting Planning

Chair Baxter reviewed information for the upcoming meetings reminding members that the next meeting would not be until April 18, 2017. Items to include on the next agenda included:

- Review of the Commission budget for the next fiscal cycle
- An update on relevant legislation

- Information on the Juvenile Justice Home-Based Initiative will be provided by the Court Improvement Project
- DHHS will provide an update on the service array and any cuts or additions that may have occurred

XX. Adjournment

It was moved by Kelli Wacker and seconded by Felicia Nelsen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

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