

**Normalcy Task Force Meeting**  
 February 1, 2017  
 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
 Southeast Community College, Rooms V-103 & 104  
 8800 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68520

**I. Call to Order**

The Normalcy Task Force (Task Force) of the Nebraska Children’s Commission was called to order at 1:07 p.m. by Co-Chair Vernon Davis.

**II. Roll Call and Introductions**

*Task Force Members present (12):*

Payne Ackerman	Vernon Davis	Nikki Novak
Erin Bader (10:20)	Jude Dean	Nicole Paul
Cassy Blakely	Kim Hawekotte	Stacey Scholten
Anna Brummer	Sarah Helvey	Lisa Story

*Task Force Members absent (9):*

Marti Beard	Heather Colton	Mickey Sampson
Ashley Brown	Patricia Frost	Deb Shuck
Nathan Collier	Claudette Grinnell-Davis	Juliet Summers

*Ex Officio and Resource Members present (1):*

Jim Bennett

*Ex Officio and Resource Members present (3):*

A’Jamal Byndon	Timoree Klingler	Ronda Newman
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A quorum was established.

*Guests in Attendance (11):*

Jodi Allen.....	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Deanna Brakhage.....	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Becca Brune.....	Nebraska Appleseed
Bethany Connor Allen.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Amanda Felton.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Sarah Forrest.....	Office of the Inspector of Nebraska Child Welfare
Mary Ann Harvey.....	Nebraska Court Improvement Project
Michele Lueders.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Tom McBride.....	Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association
Felicia Nelsen.....	Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
Julie Smith.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Deb VanDyke-Ries.....	Nebraska Court Improvement Project

*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 website in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication will 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 to the side of the meeting room.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

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It was moved by **Kim Hawekotte** and seconded by **Cassy Blakely** to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (11):**

Payne Ackerman	Jude Dean	Nicole Paul
Cassy Blakely	Kim Hawekotte	Stacey Scholten
Anna Brummer	Sarah Helvey	Lisa Story
Vernon Davis	Nikki Novak	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (10):**

Erin Bader	Heather Colton	Deb Shuck
Marti Beard	Patricia Frost	Juliet Summers
Ashley Brown	Claudette Grinnell-Davis	
Nathan Collier	Mickey Sampson	

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

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It was moved by **Kim Hawekotte** and seconded by **Nicole Paul** to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2016 meeting as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (11):**

Payne Ackerman	Jude Dean	Nicole Paul
Cassy Blakely	Kim Hawekotte	Stacey Scholten
Anna Brummer	Sarah Helvey	Lisa Story
Vernon Davis	Nikki Novak	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (10):**

Erin Bader	Heather Colton	Deb Shuck
Marti Beard	Patricia Frost	Juliet Summers
Ashley Brown	Claudette Grinnell-Davis	
Nathan Collier	Mickey Sampson	

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**V. Co-Chair Report**

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Sarah Helvey, Child Welfare Program Director with Nebraska Appleseed, greeted members and guests. She updated the members that Vernon Davis had recently been appointed as Co-Chair of the Task Force by the Children's Commission and welcomed him to his new role. The Co-Chairs noted that all reports had been forwarded to the Governor, Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Many of the recommendations had been included or influenced proposed legislation that would be discussed under the next agenda item.

## **VI. Legislative Discussion**

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Co-Chair Helvey went on to summarize the various bills that had been introduced that were relevant to the work of the Task Force.

- a. *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, which was introduced by Senator Wishart, focused on increasing access to driver's licenses for youth in out-of-home care. It also allowed for youth to purchase a vehicle and insurance with cash funds. These had been issues of discussion from the Task Force members, and if passed, it would fall on the group to identify the steps necessary to make these changes enforceable.

- b. *LB289 – Change provisions and penalties relating to pandering, human trafficking, labor trafficking, and sex trafficking and prohibit solicitation of a trafficking victim*

LB289, introduced by Senator Pansing Brooks, would change penalties for trafficking solicitation. A hearing had been set for this bill on February 23, 2017.

- c. *LB298 – Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act and a task force*

Introduced by Senator Baker, this bill would apply the provisions of the Strengthening Families Act to the juvenile justice population. It would also touch on Task Force topics such as requiring juvenile facilities to submit a normalcy plan, release of a photo when a youth goes missing from care, and a requirement that sex trafficking training be implemented by DHHS.

The one area of discussion focus from the Task Force that did not make it into legislation this session was the Youth Bill of Rights. Co-Chair Helvey noted that additional information would be provided on the next steps regarding this issue in the subcommittee updates.

- d. *LB428 – Require schools and the State Department of Education to adopt policies relating to pregnant and parenting students*

In relation to pregnant and parenting students, Senator Vargas's bill would require schools to create policies that support these youth. It would ensure that the young women in the population were not forced to choose between their child and their education.

- e. *LB297 - Create Children and Juveniles Data Pilot Project*

The Data Pilot Project, introduced by McCollister, would provide much needed access to data. In particular, the pilot would benefit the work of the Trafficking Subcommittee as it would ensure a central repository of information on youth who may go missing from care.

## **VII. Subcommittee Discussion**

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Co-Chair Davis invited each of the five subcommittees to provide an update to the group for feedback.

- a. *APPLA Subcommittee Report*

The update for the APPLA Subcommittee was provided by, Nicole Paul. She noted that areas of focus would be to put into place criteria for the courts and to examine the importance of relationships in influencing the success of youth as they age out of the system. Work to partner with the Bridge to Independence Committee of the Children's Commission was in progress.

- b. *Community and Family Voice Subcommittee Report*

Jude Dean provided an update to Task Force members. She discussed the Youth Bill of Rights, noting that while it did not get placed into legislation, DHHS had indicated the intention of including it in their policy memos. Other areas the subcommittee hoped to look into included connecting with a larger geographic scope of communities, identifying ways to support funding for normalcy activities, and to investigate ways to support relative and kinship homes.

c. *Grievance Subcommittee Report*

Sarah Forrest provided an update on the recommendations from the group. She summarized the processes, components, and appeals as noted in the report. She reminded members that the scope of the grievance process was to target system involved youth to provide them with a way to voice their grievances.

Forrest went on to explain that the members of the group felt that additional data needed to be collected before a specific recommendation on a Central Navigator could be made. With the multiple grievance processes already available, should each entity implement the process and components recommended, a central navigator position may be duplicative of existing efforts.

Concern was raised as to how oversight would happen to ensure that every agency was acting in accordance with the recommendations. Forrest noted that it would be up to DHHS and Probation to ensure that the entities they contracted had an active and appropriate grievance process. It was agreed that it was a complicated issue, but having a required uniform process would not only assist in streamlining the grievance process for youth, but help build their interpersonal relationship skills.

While the Grievance Subcommittee would not have a task in the immediate timeline, the group would reconvene to examine information at a later date. A form of evaluation would be determined at that time. It would be up to DHHS and probation to ensure that these recommendations were being followed.

**It was moved by Nicole Paul to approve and forward the updated Grievance Subcommittee recommendations to the Nebraska Children's Commission. Erin Bader seconded the motion. No further discussion ensued.**

**FOR (11):**

Payne Ackerman  
Erin Bader  
Cassy Blakely  
Anna Brummer

Vernon Davis  
Jude Dean  
Kim Hawekotte  
Sarah Helvey

Nikki Novak  
Nicole Paul  
Lisa Story

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (10):**

Marti Beard  
Ashley Brown  
Nathan Collier  
Heather Colton

Patricia Frost  
Claudette Grinnell-Davis  
Mickey Sampson  
Stacey Scholten

Deb Shuck  
Juliet Summers

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

d. *Normalcy Subcommittee Report*

Tom McBride provided a brief update on the Normalcy Subcommittee. He noted that the group had yet to meet since the last Task Force meeting. He inquired on areas of focus that the Task Force would like the subcommittee to focus on. It was suggested that the group examine LB298 and the best ways to implement the changes it outlined. Co-Chair Helvey also commented that the Normalcy Subcommittee may be a good venue to explore race equity and disproportionality issues.

e. *Trafficking Subcommittee Report*

An update on the work of the Trafficking Subcommittee was provided by Nikki Novak. She informed the members that the process for sharing data on missing youth between Probation, DHHS, and the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO) was in progress. The group would also be monitoring the progress of LB298 regarding the release of a current photo for any youth that should go missing from care.

*f. Training Subcommittee Check-in*

The Co-Chairs opened the floor to any discussion on the Training subcommittee, reminding members that the group had been put on hiatus unless a need should arise. No new tasks were suggested for the subcommittee to take on at that time.

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**VIII. Update from the Department of Health and Human Services**

An update from DHHS was provided by Jodi Allen. Allen remarked that the Youth Bill of Rights would be implemented through a policy memo as described earlier in the meeting. Allen also commented on the work being done to update the foster care regulations to include required training on the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) and sex trafficking.

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**IX. Update from Probation**

Jim Bennett provided an update on the work of Probation as it related to the Normalcy Task Force. The most relevant work being done was around trafficking prevention. He commented how many of the efforts happening with the adult system were being implemented within the juvenile field to ensure that training and information is consistent among stakeholders. In addition to the collaboration had been happening between Probation, DHHS, and the FCRO, work was happening to implement Multisystemic Therapy, to offer wraparound services with the help of Behavioral Health, and active participation in the System of Care initiative.

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**X. Next Steps**

The Co-Chairs informed the subcommittees that the May meeting would be an opportunity to share initial recommendations with the Task Force. That would allow the August meeting to provide feedback in order to have final recommendations for the November meeting. Kim Hawekotte also commented that the subcommittees should keep the element of data in mind when forming recommendations. Identifying the data necessary to show the results of implementation would allow the Task Force to be ahead of the curve when the time for evaluation arrives.

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**XI. Public Comment**

Co-Chair Helvey invited any members of the public to speak. No public comment was given.

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**XII. Future Task Force Meeting Dates**

Co-Chair Davis shared the upcoming meeting dates:

- a. May 3, 2017 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - i. Anderson Branch Library, 3635 Touzalin Ave, Lincoln, NE 68507
- b. August 2, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
  - i. Location TBD
- c. November 1, 2017 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - i. Location TBD

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**XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

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