

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

March 5, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Southeast Community College, Rooms U-104 & 106

8800 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68520

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair, Christina Lloyd, called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 10:05 a.m.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (13):

Whitney Beck	Christina Lloyd	Susan Thomas
Deanna Brakhage*	Amanda McGill Johnson (9:06)	Lana Verbrigghe
Mary Fraser Meints	Bailey Perry	Cristen White
Sarah Helvey (9:06)	Sarah Riffel	
Doug Lenz	Juliet Summers (9:07)	

Committee members absent (1):

Vernon Davis

Ex-Officio Members present (5):

Brandy Gustoff	Katie McLeese Stephenson	Tina Nocita*
Candi Marcantel	Jennifer Skala	

Ex-Officio Members absent (4):

Senator Kate Bolz	Deb VanDyke-Ries
Jeanne Brandner	Senator Anna Wishart

A quorum was established.

*Let it be noted for the record that the following individuals were designated as temporary proxies: Deanna Brakhage by Nanette Simmons and Tina Nocita by Kim Thomas.

Guests in Attendance (6):

Dr. Katie Bass	Foster Care Review Office
Amanda Felton	Nebraska Children's Commission
Misty Frazier	Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition
Mary Ann Harvey	Nebraska Court Improvement Project
Chris Jones	Nebraska Children's Commission
Camas Steuter	DHHS, Division of Children and Family 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 Meeting and Nebraska Children's Commission website 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 meeting room.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Mary Fraser Meints and seconded by Baily Perry to approve the [agenda](#) as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Whitney Beck
 Deanna Brakhage
 Mary Fraser Meints
 Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd
 Bailey Perry
 Sarah Riffel
 Susan Thomas

Lana Verbrigghe
 Cristen White

AGAINST (0):**ABSTAINED (0):****ABSENT (4):**

Vernon Davis
 Sarah Helvey

Amanda McGill Johnson
 Juliet Summers

MOTION CARRIED**IV. Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Susan Thomas to approve the [November 7, 2018 minutes](#) as presented. The motion was seconded by Deanna Brakhage. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Whitney Beck
 Deanna Brakhage
 Mary Fraser Meints
 Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd
 Bailey Perry
 Sarah Riffel
 Juliet Summers

Susan Thomas
 Lana Verbrigghe
 Cristen White

AGAINST (0):**ABSTAINED (1):**

Amanda McGill Johnson

ABSENT (2):

Vernon Davis

Sarah Helvey

MOTION CARRIED**V. Co-Chair Report**

Co-Chair Lloyd gave the floor to Commission Policy Analyst, Chris Jones, to update membership on the status of the current Children's Commission legislation. Jones informed members that both LB330 and LB332 had been introduced by Senator Bolz. Members reviewed LB332, which included legislative language regarding the B2i program. All of the changes proposed in the bill had been taken from previous report recommendations of the Committee.

Misty Frazier, Director of the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition (NICWC), brought up the complications that arise with tribal youth upon aging out. It was explained that most tribes recognize the age of majority at 18. The B2i program enrolls young adults at age 19, the State of Nebraska's recognized age of majority. The one-year gap for native youth made locating youth for enrollment particularly challenging and subjected them to a potential period without support or resources.

Members deliberated how best to tackle this issue. It was agreed that a statutory language change recognizing age of majority at either the state or tribal definition would ensure that the program could benefit all young adults aging out of care without permanency. The hope was to forward the recommendation to the office of Senator Bolz for consideration as an amendment to LB332.

It was moved by Juliet Summers and seconded by Sarah Helvey to recommend an amendment be added to LB332 which would extend eligibility for the Bridge to Independence program to native youth aging out of Tribal Court proceedings at the age of majority as defined by the tribe. Discussion included inquiries as to if there was data on the number of youth who this would affect and what the potential fiscal impact would be. Misty Frazier noted that while she would need to coordinate with DHHS for official numbers, that initial calculations showed only 25 native youth who would have been eligible since the program's inception in 2014.

Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Whitney Beck
Mary Fraser Meints
Sarah Helvey
Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd
Amanda McGill Johnson
Bailey Perry
Sarah Riffel

Juliet Summers
Susan Thomas
Cristen White

AGAINST (0):**ABSTAINED (1):**

Deanna Brakhage

ABSENT (2):

Vernon Davis
Lana Verbrigghe

MOTION CARRIED**VI. Evaluation and Data Collection Workgroup Update**

Dr. Katie Bass, Chair of the Evaluation and Data Collection Workgroup, gave an update on the work happening with the external evaluation. Bass provided a [handout](#) summarizing the work to pull together a handful of focus groups for the first portion of the study. She shared the [announcement](#) that went out to field staff and a [breakdown](#) of what the focus groups would look like.

VII. Foster Care Review Office Update

Dr. Bass noted that the FCRO review forms updated in August had been used on over 160 reviews so far. Bass was hopeful that they would have a good sample of data to pull from for the next meeting. She reminded members of the shift in process in order to focus on the tracking of specific goals of the young adults.

VIII. Department of Health and Human Services Update

Deanna Brakhage, Program Specialist with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), shared the program data from the recent [Continuous Quality Improvement \(CQI\) packet](#). Areas members requested follow-up on included data on if young adults were choosing to get Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) funds over B2i stipends and the number of program participants who have had a termination of parental rights filed for their dependents.

a. Extended Guardianship and Adoption Discussion

Brakhage explained the typical process for disrupted guardianships and adoptions was for a youth to re-enter the system under their original abuse and neglect filing. Currently, 47 system involved youth would be aging out of a guardianship placement that was established prior to age 16. It was noted that there had been a rise in purposeful guardianship disruption for these cases. It was believed this was done in order to allow youth to be eligible for both Medicaid and the B2i program by aging out of the system as a state ward. The exact number of this occurrence were unknown, but members agreed that education needed to be provided on alternative resources available without disrupting the permanency of these youth and young adults.

IX. Families First Prevention Services Act Update

DHHS representatives working on the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) initiative were unable to attend the meeting. Deanna Brakhage provided some insight into the current efforts in their stead. She noted that inquiries were in progress to determine if young adults could utilize both the B2i program and aid from the FFPSA, given that they both utilized federal IV-E dollars. She did not foresee any additional service provisions by the October roll-out. Brakhage noted an upcoming pilot project in the panhandle through Healthy Families America that would target expecting parents at risk of involvement with the child welfare system. She also discussed the efforts to put added focus on the transitional living plans of youth in care who are pregnant or parenting.

X. Public Comment

The Co-Chairs welcomed public comment. No public comment was provided.

XI. New Business

There was no new business.

XII. Upcoming Meeting Planning

The Co-Chairs noted that a meeting would be scheduled sometime for May or June of 2019.

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Felton