

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

June 4, 2019

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Lincoln Community Foundation Building, 5th Floor Conference Room
215 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair, Jeanne Brandner, called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 2:07 p.m.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (12):

Whitney Beck	Sarah Helvey	Sarah Riffel
Vernon Davis	Doug Lenz	Juliet Summers
Mary Fraser Meints	Christina Lloyd	Susan Thomas
Misty Frazier (2:19)	Amanda McGill Johnson	Lana Verbrigghe (2:10)

Committee members absent (3):

Bailey Perry
Camas Steuter
Cristen White

Ex-Officio Members present (3):

Jeanne Brander
Mary Ann Harvey*
Matthew Tewes*

Ex-Officio Members absent (8):

Brandy Gustoff	Jennifer Skala	Deb VanDyke-Ries
Candi Marcantel	Kim Thomas	Senator Anna Wishart
Katie McLeese Stephenson	Senator Kate Bolz	

A quorum was established.

*Let it be noted for the record that the following individuals were designated as temporary proxies: Mary Ann Harvey by Deb VanDyke-Ries and Matthew Tewes by Senator Anna Wishart.

Guests in Attendance (6):

Dr. Katie Bass	.....	Foster Care Review Office
Amanda Felton	.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Alexis Foster	.....	Voices for Children
Mary Ann Harvey	.....	Nebraska Court Improvement Project
Chris Jones	.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Kathleen Stolz	.....	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Terrence Williams	.....	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 Sarah Helvey and seconded by Amanda McGill Johnson to approve the [agenda](#) as presented.

There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Whitney Beck	Doug Lenz	Juliet Summers
Vernon Davis	Christina Lloyd	Susan Thomas
Mary Fraser Meints	Amanda McGill Johnson	
Sarah Helvey	Sarah Riffel	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Misty Frazier	Lana Verbrigghe
Bailey Perry	Cristen White
Camas Steuter	

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Sarah Helvey to approve the [March 5, 2019 minutes](#) as presented. The motion was seconded by Doug Lenz. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Whitney Beck	Doug Lenz	Juliet Summers
Vernon Davis	Christina Lloyd	Susan Thomas
Mary Fraser Meints	Amanda McGill Johnson	
Sarah Helvey	Sarah Riffel	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Misty Frazier	Lana Verbrigghe
Bailey Perry	Cristen White
Camas Stuetter	

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Report

Co-Chair Lloyd updated the committee on the legislative session. LB600 passed to include provision to extend the Children's Commission and the statutory committees under the commission. Lloyd clarified that legislation will not extend B2i coverage to general juvenile justice population, and that it will only cover youth with disrupted guardianship or state-funded adoption that disrupts after the youth turns 16-years old. Discussion revealed that under new law, county attorneys would require education in practice to file under 43-247, subsection 8 in order for a youth to gain B2i eligibility. Youth legal representation will need to have discussion with the county attorney in instances of an existing guardianship or adoption. Additionally, the Nebraska residency component was clarified with language that youth participating in B2i must be residents of Nebraska. Youth placed through ICPC will still maintain residency. Lloyd highlighted that in order to maintain IV-E fund drawdown, "best interest" and "reasonable efforts" language needs to be specified in court findings.

Committee members discussed instances where there is a choice between a guardian receiving extended adoption support or a youth receiving the B2i stipend. DHHS is to provide written notice in these instances. Further discussion revolved around

Independence Hearings prior to termination of jurisdiction. It was agreed that education to judges will be needed in the upcoming year regarding Independence Hearings. There is a guardianship subcommittee under the Courts Commission which will be examining B2i issues. The Courts Commission will be another avenue to deliver information about subsection 8 youth and Independence Hearings.

VI. Child Trends Evaluation 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](#) of the language changes to the annual report in the External Evaluation section. She discussed language changes and Outcome Analysis changes. She answered questions about what outcomes will be highlighted in the Child Trends Evaluation. Dr. Bass updated the committee about the evaluation focus groups.

VII. Approval of B2i Advisory Committee Annual Report

Children's Commission Staff Member, Chirs Jones directed the committee's attention to recent [revisions](#) to the Annual Report. Pages 4 and 5 of the [Annual Report](#) will be replaced with revised language. Additionally, Jones referenced the [data attachment](#) had been revised to include current data and the format of the report has been updated.

Deanna Brakhage directed the committee's attention to the [data attachment](#) of the annual report. Brakhage updated the committee on changes made to the attachment from previous iterations. The attachment is more condensed than previous versions. Brakhage answered specific questions regarding key demographics such as parenting, pregnancy, history of the report. She clarified that the IV-E numbers could dip within the upcoming months due to changes in legislation regarding residency and Developmental Disabilities eligibility for B2i. Brakhage and Terrence Williams clarified specifics about barriers and reasons for exiting B2i. A highlight of the data presented showed that 95% of youth that age-out of the child welfare system are receiving voluntary services through B2i.

Discussion ensued regarding low enrollment numbers among tribal youth in the child welfare system and barriers encountered regarding the B2i Independence Coordinators' ability to access court orders, allowing them to process applications and attend hearings. Discussion continued regarding tribal age of majority and changes needed in recommendation language.

Dr. Katie Bass updated the committee regarding the upcoming Child Trends Evaluation as it relates to the annual report and upcoming surveys and focus groups to collect data on B2i participants or those that were not eligible. Dr. Bass clarified the data collected will also contain information about youth receiving services from other avenues, such as PALs, Opportunity Passport, Great Plains.

The committee continued to discuss changes in the annual report regarding caseload sizes and workforce historical context, referring to previous caseload size recommendations.

It was moved by Sarah Helvey to amend recommendation number 4 on page 3 to sustain consistently with the committee's previous caseload recommendations of the case management workgroup – DHHS will ensure IC have caseloads as listed – and will have B2i programs caseloads – and the advisory committee re-examine caseload sized after the evaluation is complete to reassess. The motion was seconded by Lana Verbrigghe. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Whitney Beck
Vernon Davis
Mary Fraser Meints
Mistry Frazier

Sarah Helvey
Doug Lenz
Christina Lloyd
Amanda McGill Johnson

Sarah Riffel
Juliet Summers
Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (3):

Bailey Perry
Camas Stuetter

Cristen White

MOTION CARRIED

Final revisions to the annual report were discussed to include: add to the legislative changes; changes in recommendation number one to language from the meeting minutes; changes to recommendation number five, changes to FCRO total monthly numbers; change to two populations vs. two; and grammatical corrections.

It was moved by Mary Fraser Meints to approve the revised annual report. The motion was seconded by Doug Lenz. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Whitney Beck

Vernon Davis

Mary Fraser Meints

Mistry Frazier

Sarah Helvey

Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd

Amanda McGill Johnson

Sarah Riffel

Juliet Summers

Susan Thomas

Lana Verbrighhe

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (3):

Bailey Perry

Camas Stuetter

Cristen White

MOTION CARRIED

VIII. Public Comment

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

IX. New Business

The point was raised by Committee Member Fraser Meints that it would be worthwhile to reach out to DHHS Director Matt Wallen to discuss B2i. Co-chair Brandner agreed to contact Director Wallen with Fraser Meints to gather information and clarification on current practices.

X. Upcoming Meeting Planning

The Co-Chairs noted that a meeting would be scheduled in mid to late October of 2019.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson