

Nebraska Children’s Commission Meeting
February 18,2020
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Firespring, 1201 Infinity Court, Lincoln, NE 68512

1. Call to Order

Chair Jeanne Brandner and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. She welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Introductions and Roll Call

Commission Members Present (12)

Beth Baxter	Misty Frazier	Felicia Nelsen
Jim Blue	Ron Giesselmann	Lana Temple-Plotz (9:21 a.m.)
A’Jamal Byndon	Richard Hasty	Susan Thomas
Vernon Davis	Jessica Hilderbrand	Melanie Williams-Smotherman

Commission Members Absent (3)

Breanna Anderson
Kathy Dinkel
Terri Knutson

Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (5)

Jeanne Brandner	Lori Harder	Deb VanDyke-Ries
Sheri Dawson	Judge Roger Heideman	

Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (5)

Senator Kate Bolz	Senator Patty Pansing Brooks	Senator Lynn Walz
Michele Borg	Julie Rogers	

Roll call was taken through introductions and a quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (10)

Adam Anderson.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Peg Harriot.....	Chair of the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee
Tom McBride.....	Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association
Kathy Moore.....	Foster Care Review Office
Laura Opfer.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Bill Williams.....	Co-Chair of the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee
Dustin Zabokrtsky.....	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Adam Anderson, 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.

3. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Susan Thomas and seconded by Beth Baxter to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Beth Baxter	Misty Frazier	Felicia Nelsen
Jim Blue	Ron Giesselmann	Susan Thomas
A'Jamal Byndon	Richard Hasty	Melanie Williams-Smotherman
Vernon Davis	Jessica Hilderbrand	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (4):

Breanna Anderson	Terri Knutson
Kathy Dinkel	Lana Temple-Plotz

MOTION CARRIED

Note that the order of items in the minutes will be reflective of the original agenda

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a. [Approval of December 10, 2019 Meeting Minutes](#)
- b. [Committee Member Nomination Report](#)

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

- Foster Parent who Contracts Directly with the Department of Health and Human Services
 - **Lisa Story, to fill vacancy (Voting)** – Foster Parent, Northeastern Nebraska

Strengthening Families Act

- Representative from the Juvenile Probation System
 - **Jeremy Behrends, to replace Jim Bennet (Non-Voting)** - Juvenile Justice Program Specialist, Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation

Vernon Davis moved to approve the consent agenda items as presented. Misty Frazier seconded the motion. No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Beth Baxter	Misty Frazier	Felicia Nelsen
Jim Blue	Ron Giesselmann	Susan Thomas
A'Jamal Byndon	Richard Hasty	Melanie Williams-Smotherman
Vernon Davis	Jessica Hilderbrand	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (4):

Breanna Anderson	Terri Knutson
Kathy Dinkel	Lana Temple-Plotz

MOTION CARRIED

5. Chair Report

Chair Jeanne Brandner provided an overview of the meeting, noting that there will be lengthy discussion regarding pending legislation. Brandner also highlighted that many of the committees under the Nebraska Children's Commission have vacant or soon to become vacant Co-Chair positions and urged members not currently active in a Committee to consider becoming active as a member or Co-Chair.

6. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

Peg Harriott and Bill Williams, Co-Chairs of the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee (FCRRC), directed Commission Members' attention to the [PowerPoint presentation and handout](#). Harriott noted that this presentation only contains a portion of the finalized recommendations from the FCRRC. She added that there are two recommendations that will be approved in committee that will then be brought in front of the Children's Commission at the next meeting. Harriott stated that the goal of the presentation is to move towards finalizing adoption and guardianship rates recommendations that can then go in front of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature. The goal of the FCRRC is final approval of all recommendations at the May Children's Commission meeting.

Harriott continued by framing the discussion according to the historical context of the FCRRC, that their original charge was to separate out the daily rate that goes to the foster care agency and the daily rate that goes to the foster parent to provide support of the youth. She added that the Children's Commission and Legislature has also asked the FCRRC to provide feedback on the adoption subsidy rate.

Harriott noted that the items ready for approval by the Children's Commission are: Essential through Intensive Rates (Foster Parent and Agency), Adoption Subsidy Pilot Recommendations, Level of Responsibility Agency Expectations, and Revised Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool (NCR). Items left to be voted on are Specialized Rates (Foster Parent and Agency) and Treatment Foster Care Rates.

Harriott directed the Commission's attention to [Handout 4.1](#), a document detailing the rational and justification for the Essential Foster Care Reimbursement Rate or Base Rate. She provided an overview of the document and noted that the methodology for determining the Base Rate is laid out in statute. Harriott provided examples of items that were excluded from the *USDA's Expenditures on Children by Families* report to show how the workgroup arrived at their totals. Harriott answered a question regarding the difference between an urban and rural rate by noting that this workgroup used a blended rate.

Peg Harriott and Lori Harder answered specific questions regarding oversight of foster care reimbursement payments made to foster parents, and how it is ensured that children are receiving the medical and dental care they need. They noted that foster parent payments are not designed to be used as wages, but are designed to offset the cost of supporting a child. Lori Harder noted that changes enacted by the managed care organizations (MCO) recently have made it difficult for youth to get orthodontic care as it can be viewed as a cosmetic procedure. Harder added that each state ward is assigned a care coordinator through the MCO that is responsible for monitoring that each state ward is receiving the necessary medical care. Discussions regarding special medical needs would be done at family team meetings. Harder continued by noting that Angie Ludemann has been hired as the Well-Being Administrator, who will be responsible for the long term, visionary items like education, employment, inclusion in community activities, and preventive healthcare.

Co-Chair Williams noted that rates have remained steady for long periods of time so an increase of this amount looks larger than an incremental rate change in a shorter period of time. Members discussed the different ways in which rates are determined across the country, and the FCRRC charge or conducting rate reviews every four years.

Harriott continued by explaining the tiered rate recommendation between the increasing tiers of the NCR. She shared that the FCRRC approved a \$7.50 per day difference between each increasing tier of the NCR.. She added that the

FCRRC continues to discuss the rate for the Specialized or 4th Tier of the NCR, as the market rate currently being paid outside the levels of the NCR is considerably higher than a \$7.50 jump from the Intensive Tier. The FCRRC will return in to the Children's Commission in May with a rate recommendation for the Specialized Tier. Harriott then directed the member's attention to the NCR, [Handout 4.2](#). Members discussed the need for the Specialized Tier of the NCR. Harriot noted that the professional rate currently paid by Probation and formerly by Promiseship is much higher, as the need for at least one caregiver to be away from work is much greater at the higher NCR levels. The higher rate is used to offset that loss of work. Jeanne Brandner noted that Probation developed a professional level in response to the need for Treatment Family Care (TFC) that has yet to be developed across the state, and added that when TFC is approved for reimbursement, the professional level will no longer be needed. Chair of the Level of Responsibility Workgroup, Lana Temple-Plotz noted that one example of a Specialized Tier caregiver would be for a medically fragile child that is not currently hospitalized. Temple-Plotz answered questions regarding the specific training foster parents would receive to meet the needs of that specific child, with either high medical or behavioral needs, and she added that the training would be provided by the placing agency. Members discussed individualized training versus statewide training. Lori Harder, DHHS Deputy Director for Protection and Safety noted that kinship and relative caregiver training is now available online that will allow for licensure. After training, the kinship or relative caregiver home will be eligible for the same maintenance payments received by agency supported homes.

Members discussed the historical perspective of Treatment Family Care and the hurdles it faces moving forward. Peg Harriot provided information that the state used to have TFC, however when the child was returned home the recommendation was to stop TFC. It was the FCRRC's recommendation that TFC would be able to follow the child after they return home or move to another placement.

Co-Chair Bill Williams directed the Commission's attention to the [Agency Administrative Rates handout](#). Williams described the methodology for determining the agency administrative rate, and also noted that a survey was sent out to foster parents to research rates and find out how the needs of children are being met. Additionally, a survey was sent out to agencies to determine the costs associated with providing support to foster parents. Williams noted that the information received from the agency survey was used in determining the tiered rate amounts. He added that the proposed agency rates will be in effect into 2025, the same for the foster parent rates. Williams then directed Members' attention to the [Agency Level of Responsibility handout](#), and described the rationale behind developing a set of expectations for the agency regarding the tiered levels of the NCR. Harriott added that the Agency LOR is a new document requested by DHHS as a companion document to the NCR. Williams also noted that with an increase in the rates leads to an increase in responsibility of the agency.

Lastly, Harriott and Williams provided information and recommendations regarding the [DHHS Southeast Service Area Adoption Subsidy Pilot](#). Williams noted that the pilot allows for 65% of the Essential Rate for all subsidies for children at the Essential Tier of the NCR upon exiting foster care. Laura Opfer noted that at this time only those with subsidized adoption assistance have a method for increases in the subsidy amount, and those that are in guardianship agreements do not, should circumstances in the family change. The FCRRC recommends that guardianship agreements be allowed to request increases and have an opportunity to appeal if denied. Lori Harder noted that a decision will be made regarding statewide implementation once the new Children and Family Services Director is hired in March. Harriot and Williams answered questions regarding the necessity and duration of subsidies.

Harriott and Williams encouraged the Children's Commission to vote to approve the presented recommendations. Chair Brandner noted that although it is recommended that Probation utilize the NCR and replace the use of vouchers, Probation does not have the infrastructure for foster care as recommended, and that Probation doesn't use foster care in terms of permanency in the agency's perspective, as they are supervising youth in the community. She added that the work and sentiment in developing the NCR is appreciated, however it is not something that Probation is looking to utilize. The FCRRC will take the comments of Probation into consideration when making final recommendation to the legislature.

A'Jamal Byndon moved to approve the consent agenda items as presented. Jessica Hilderbrand seconded the motion. No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Beth Baxter
Jim Blue
A'Jamal Byndon
Vernon Davis

Misty Frazier
Ron Giesselmann
Richard Hasty
Jessica Hilderbrand

Felicia Nelsen
Lana Temple-Plotz
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (1):

Melanie Williams-Smotherman

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (3):

Breanna Anderson
Kathy Dinkel

Terri Knutson

MOTION CARRIED

7. Strengthening Families Act Committee

Vernon Davis updated the Commission on the chair vacancy and the recent hearing on the youth in care bill of rights, as well as updated the Commission on the recent bill regarding driver's licenses for youth in foster care. Jessica Hilderbrand updated the Commission on the Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) Subcommittee priority of looking at data for youth aging out of the system unprepared and looking at the independent living assessment. The APPLA Subcommittee has reached out to Dr. Bass from the FCRO to help the Subcommittee dig into the data a little more, so that as the Subcommittee moves forward they are doing so according to the relevant data. Davis updated the committee regarding the work of the Trafficking Subcommittee. He noted that the Attorney General Office changed the focus on trafficking to the legal issues, so discussions within the Subcommittee revolve around aftercare monitoring for survivors of trafficking and providing supports to the survivors.

8. Juvenile Services Committee Update

Chair Brandner opened up discussion to Juvenile Services Committee (JSC) members to update the Commission on the previous JSC Meeting. Kathy Moore was present at the last JSC meeting, in place of Kim Hawekotte who has recently left the FCRO. Moore noted that she was previously the Chair of the JSC, and while attending the meeting she observed that many of the issues discussed were some of the same issues discussed in the past. She added that Marisa Harris from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) presented information on the potential return of the state to the Title II program, and what that reentry would look like. Moore was encouraged by the presentation. A'Jamal Byndon noted that the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) coming back into Title II compliance was hopeful for the future, as it shines the spotlight on racial and ethnic disparities across the state, and not solely in Douglas County, who are currently receiving the Title II funds. He added that it was nice to hear the kindness and outreach from the federal partners. Deb VanDyke-Reis expressed that the young adult voice was a positive aspect of the meeting. She noted that Youth Advocates Bobbi Taylor and Raevin Bigelow were very professional and to the point about some of the concerns they have regarding juvenile justice. Moore agreed, and added that the JSC had previously offered training to adults about how to truly be inclusive of youth and to teach youth how to step up to the plate as full participants. Byndon added that the historical perspective is helpful to hear.

Brandner responded to the update by saying that it would be important for the JSC to look at the statutory charge of the Committee to develop a plan. She suggested that the JSC look over past reports to see if the recommendations have been met or if there are still areas that the Committee needs to go back and revamp or decide if they are still valid. She noted that the most recent legislative report regarding YRTC's references the 2013 JSC report numerous times.

Melanie Williams-Smotherman added that it is important to look at and provide oversight to the YRTC system to provide an independent perspective to children at the YRTC's.

Tom McBride added specific information about the history of the relation between the NCJJ and JSC. Due to reduced federal funding at the NCJJ and the Nebraska Crime Commission, it was necessary to combine efforts in order to save money and continue their work. Moore added that at one point the funding was around \$900,000, but had shrunk to \$400,000 over the years.

Kathy Moore will reach out and discuss some of the statutory language with NCJJ Chair, Elaine Menzel and JSC Co-Chair Nicole Brundo.

Misty Frazier raised concern regarding tribal representation on the JSC due to the large disproportionality of tribal youth at the YRTCs. Frazier offered to help find a tribal voice for the JSC.

JSC members discussed a presentation given by DHHS regarding YRTCs, noting that there was optimism in the improvements in the education program and the seamlessness between the campuses, as concern was raised on the movements of the residents between the three campuses. Kathy Moore discussed her history regarding programs and systems to make kids feel safe, including observations regarding the Missouri Model of youth treatment facilities. She added that discussion at the meeting was lacking in that regard, but looks forward to those questions for the JSC to probe.

9. Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee

Chair Brandner opened discussion as Co-Chair of the Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee (B2i). At the last B2i meeting the recently completed [evaluation](#) of B2i by ChildTrends was discussed. The evaluation lays out some very significant impacts that the program has on youth aging out of foster care. She continued by saying that the evaluation contains evidence that B2i could have a positive impact on other populations, including the juvenile probation population.

Brandner continued by noting proposed legislation regarding the inclusion of developmental disabilities (DD) population in the B2i program was discussed. She added that DD eligible youth are receiving service coordination but are not funded through DD. The statutory change last year affected youth that are DD eligible by excluding them from the B2i program, and that was not the intent of the B2i Committee. The Committee will continue to monitor pending legislative changes so that every eligible youth is able to be supported by B2i if they are not supported through other sources.

Brandner relayed information regarding a potential variance per participant in the B2i stipend amount and that the Committee continues to examine this issue. Lori Harder noted that NCR would need to be completed at age 18.5 prior to the youth aging out. She added that DHHS continues to look at this issue.

Lastly, Brandner noted that there is a legislative bill this year that extends eligibility for tribal youth that reach their tribe's age of majority. More discussion will follow in the Legislative Update.

10. Probation Update

Chair Brandner updated the Commission regarding the recent work of Probation. Brandner relayed to the Commission that Probation has been enmeshed in the legislative session. She clarified that the additional 2% funding increase provided in last year did not affect all services. Probation received additional funding for therapeutic services, and that cost savings allowed increases in other services that weren't historically able to increase. Brandner noted that a shift has been made to provide in-home services, and that if the need to transition a child out of home is prevented, that translates into a big savings. Probation has looked into a number of new federal funding streams and noted a drop in kids coming into probation. She continued that the savings has allowed Probation to reinvest their dollars into those rate increases. Brandner noted that the bottom line is that \$10 million this year will be reverted back to the state.

Brandner discussed the continuing service development and expansion that began in the western half of the state, but not limited to the western half of the state. She noted that even in Omaha or Lincoln there are not always the appropriate services available or aren't necessarily full, or the appropriate funding access is missing. Probation continues to look at the needs of the youth and continues to develop continuum of services building. Brandner emphasized that although there is work to decrease placements, Probation will never be in a place where they don't have a need for placement, especially high end placements. Judge Roger Heideman added the need for specialized placements is important in lieu of the YRTC placements. Brandner noted that it is important for officers going to court with multiple options to wraparound youth and for officers to look outside the box to meet their needs.

11. DHHS Update

Lori Harder notified the Commission that a new Director of Children and Family Services has been hired. Director Stephanie Beasley is starting on February 24th. Her email will be stephanie.l.beasley@nebraska.gov. Harder continued by relaying that Mike Puls, the Service Area Administrator in the Northern Service Area is retiring from DHHS on April 1. He has worked for DHHS for 43 years, and Harder expressed that they are sorry to see him go, but it is a well-deserved retirement. Advertisement for the position will be coming soon, and that advertisement would be for any candidate located in the entire Northern Service Area. Harder encouraged Commission Members to let parties know if interested. She continued by announcing that DHHS is also hiring for Masters of Social Work. There will be an MSW in each service area over the Resource Development placement utilization management teams, working on complex needs children with MCOs, Behavioral Health, and DD, to provide services and supports to those children.

Harder relayed to the Commission that DHHS is looking at Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Coaches. SOP is a method of family and child engagement. Trainings are in the midst of being rolled out across the state. All new workers will be trained on SOP through CCFL, including Saint Francis workers.

Harder noted that DHHS completed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for home studies and realigned the Resource Development staff. Doug Beran is over the licensing portion of Resource Development, and Harder retained the placement portion. Harder added that the Ombudsman, the Office of Inspector General, Judges, and others pointed out that having all the discretion of the home study, licensing, and placement unilaterally didn't look good, thus the home study contract, the reorganization. This was all in effort to ensure there are appropriate checks in balances regarding placements. Harder noted that the new contractors have begun and are busy building up their networks. She answered questions regarding the specifics of the contracts and the staff. Harder will send the DHHS web location of the contract to Adam Anderson, to share with the Commission.

Harder continued by updating the Commission on the roll out of FFPSA. She noted that there are upcoming discussions with Probation regarding an interagency agreement regarding pulling down federal funds for probation youth that are candidates for foster care in their homes using an evidence based program. DHHS is working with Saint Francis regarding evidence-based models in the Eastern Service Area. Harder noted that questions from the federal partners were regarding how DHHS evaluates their EVPs and how they maintain fidelity. She added that Chapin Hall is evaluating the thirteen states that were early adopters. Harder is hopeful that DHHS can submit their response by the end of February. When there is approval from the Feds, DHHS will retro-claim back to October 2019, through October 2020.

Harder updated the Commission regarding DHHS's work on bringing up the Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP), and she explained some of the requirements of the QRTP. OMNI is the only one currently. Discussions continue with CEDARS, Boys Town, and HopeSpoke about signing up to be QRTP.

Harder noted that DHHS is working with the Court Improvement Project (CIP) on a call to action regarding adoption measures. She added that the state struggles with timeliness to permanency. There will be a push reaching out to pregnant parents with options counseling to inform their decision regarding adoption prior to birth. Harder answered questions regarding abuse/neglect reporting and the removal of children at birth. She noted that policy has changed regarding reports on youth aged 0-5 from hospital staff and added that policy is in place regarding Children and Family Services staff going to the hospital on the day of the birth. Harder emphasized that staff will meet with families on all reports from medical staff on youth aged 0-5. Harder explained the way that DHHS responds to complaints, and she encouraged feedback at any time.

A'Jamal Byndon noted a large gap between what the community knows and the department policies. Byndon noted the need to have discussion about overall system needs but speculated that there is a need for more open and frequent communication to the Commission, so that members may help the Department make informed decisions, share information with families, and to have a far less adversarial relationship.

12. Strategic Priorities

Vice Chair Lana Temple-Plotz directed the Commission's attention to the [Strategic Priorities Tracker](#). She noted that this handout tracks all strategic priorities for the Commission, including the statutory committees. Members discussed the specific items in the tracking spreadsheet. Members noted that there have been suggestions regarding legislation

exempting certain statuses from truancy. Chair Brandner noted that by February 23rd Priority Bills have to be determined and added that it is unlikely that there will be movement on non-priority bills. Richard Hasty noted that [LB751](#) is the current bill regarding mental health consideration in school policy regarding excessive absence due to illness.

Laura Opfer discussed [Amendment 2417](#) on [LB1061](#) that would eliminate the Psychotropic Medications Committee (PMC) was developed out of discussions with Commission Staff to have the bandwidth to accommodate additional statutory committees without sacrificing the progress of current active committees. Opfer added that LB1061 is the bill that creates the Alternative Response Committee. Beth Baxter shared the history regarding the PMC. Vernon Davis noted that DHHS has taken oversight regarding managing psychotropic medications under their spectrum of care. Lori Harder added that there is a DHHS Healthcare Oversight Committee, and along with the Chief Medical Officer and MCOs, psychotropic medications are being looked at for all children in the state, not just system involved children. Harder also added that MCOs are reporting out psychotropic medication use by children in Nebraska.

Chair Brandner noted that the Strategic Priority Tracker is a draft document to be used in an attempt to get the process on paper, to not lose sight of the priorities. She added that while there are many hot topic areas, the Commission should not lose sight of the priorities.

A'Jamal Byndon shared thoughts about encouraging others to support the efforts of the Commission by writing letters of support to the Legislature. He added that it would be wise if Commission Members share the letters of support written by the Commission or a template, to encourage those outside the Commission that may feel uncomfortable writing letters of support to the Legislature.

Misty Frazier shared that there is a Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Committee organized by Jamie Kramer that the Commission can share information with. Frazier noted that herself and A'Jamal Byndon are on the Committee. Temple-Plotz encouraged any members involved to share information regarding RED Committee with Laura Opfer for report out at Commission meetings. Byndon added there is a bill that deals with juvenile justice data.

Regarding item #7 on the Strategic Priorities Tracker, Jessica Hilderbrand volunteered to Co-Chair the SFA Committee. Members discussed YRTC and upcoming legislation. Members would like to invite others involved with the YRTCs, such as Senator Howard or community members, to join the meeting for a perspective other than DHHS.

13. Legislative Update

Chair Jeanne Brandner opened the legislative update discussion by sharing the desire of the Executive Committee for transparency regarding pending legislation. She shared that there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes during the legislative session. Brandner added that as the Commission looks at the schedule into next year that it would be advantageous to plan around the legislative session. She noted that it wasn't the intent of the Executive Committee to not take positions on legislation or leave anything out, but this year there was a time factor as the Commission transitions with new staff and members. Brandner speculated that the Commission may have a meeting after new bills are introduced or prioritized.

Brandner directed the Commission's attention to the [Policy Filter](#), and gave a brief explanation. Members discussed the advantages of having the Legislative and Executive Committee determine what legislation the Commission will address. Kathy Moore offered that in the next legislative year it would be a good idea to have position statements that are broad and overarching to test new legislation against the to determine relevance.

Brandner continued by directing attention to [Handout 6.1](#), regarding LB1061, and explained that a large amount of the bill authorizes DHHS to continue to utilize the Alternative Response (AR) Program, but nestled within the bill is a section that names the Commission to appoint an AR Advisory Committee. Members discussed some of the specific requirements of the potential committee. Laura Opfer added that this bill has the high probability of becoming a priority and moving through the legislature this year. Brandner noted that the Children's Commission offered support for LB1061. Lori Harder shared that with FFPSA and a desire to focus on prevention and engagement, much work has been done at the Abuse Neglect Hotline. She shared that often times when reports are screened out referrals are made to other community resources and noted that reviews are done by Program Specialists on the reports that are screened out. This information will be added to the Community Services Map, so communities can see the reasons for screened out reports and see what is needed at the neighborhood level. Harder added that DHHS would like to respond to

reports of abuse and neglect in the way that Nebraskans would like to have DHHS respond. Lori noted that there are discussion regarding redesigning the Hotline. Members discussed the anonymity issues regarding the Hotline. Members shared thoughts on applying Commission priorities to the updates brought forth by DHHS and the overall discussion of issues raised during Commission meetings.

Chair Brandner directed Member's attention to the [Executive Summary](#) of the Legislature's HHS Committee "[Report to the Nebraska Legislature on the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers.](#)" Brandner noted that of the YRTC bills being introduced, many of the recommendations come from reports from the Juvenile Services Committee's "[Phase I Recommendations](#)" from 2013. Brandner added that these bills will likely be wrapped up into one larger bill.

Chair Brandner continued by referencing the [Executive Summary](#) of the "Nebraska IV-E Waiver Final Report" from UNL CCFL. Commission staff will reach out to UNL CCFL for attendance at upcoming meetings to discuss AR.

Ron Giesselman noted that, considering the quick timeframes for the work of the Legislative Committee, everything went pretty smoothly. He added that having Senators come in to discuss bills they may have, would help. Chair Brandner noted that requests for support or questions from the Senators during the bill introduction phase were given special consideration. She added that this year there were some broad issues that the Commission is in support of, but when looking at the specifics of the bills, there was much more to consider, and difficult decisions to make regarding support. Commission members agreed to consider alternative meeting schedules during the legislative season. Chair Brandner and Richard Hasty agreed with Kathy Moore's previous proposal for crafting statements for each of the policy area to be used for positions of support in the future. Laura Opfer continues to have dialogue with Senators regarding pending legislations. Harriott noted that the [Nebraska Children's Commission 2018-2019 Annual Report](#) may have position statements for each of the policy areas.

Lastly, Chair Brandner shared that [LB 849](#), a bill that the B2i Advisory Committee has made historical recommendations on, to look at the age of enrollment for tribal youth into the B2i program. Brandner noted that for some tribes in Nebraska the age of majority is 18 and not 19 for Nebraskans. She added that the likelihood for this moving forward is good, and the B2i Advisory Committee is excited about that.

14. YRTC Update

Chair Brandner welcomed Dustin Zabokrtsky from DHHS. Zabokrtsky directed the Commission's attention to a [PowerPoint](#), and walked the Commission through the planning and development of the YRTC plan. He noted that many of the YRTC recommendations from the 2013 JSC "[Phase I Recommendations](#)" report aided in the development of the Business Plan that will then lead into future-state planning. Zabokrtsky added that DHHS will be engaging a consulting firm to aid in the future state planning. He noted that the consultants being considered are Chin Consulting; Mark with the Missouri Services Institute, who developed the Missouri Model; and Annie E. Casey. He added that Annie E. Casey does not currently have the capacity for this study.

Zabokrtsky answered questions regarding stakeholders who have experience the system. Melanie Williams-Smotherman agreed to supply volunteer names to Zabokrtsky to become members of the steering committee for future state planning, and Misty Frazier agreed to provide names for tribal representation, as tribal youth are disproportionately over-represented in the YRTCs.

Zabokrtsky walked through the Business Plan Goals, Guiding Principles, and program updates across the three YRTC campuses. A'Jamal Byndon shared thoughts on ways to increase the credibility of the system partners through a neutral party or an advocate that has lived experience, rather than those that maintain the system. Zabokrtsky responded that this idea is something DHHS will be looking at through the consultant and there are opportunities to engage those advocates.

Zabokrtsky continued by providing an update on the educational and clinical updates across the system. He pointed out that the YRTCs will have a school system allowing for students to transfer to different locations and maintain educational connections during transfers. He noted that the Nebraska Department of Education has had input throughout the entire planning process. He discussed staffing levels and current state and added that there is Family Navigator program in the planning stages that would help youth and families navigate the transition back home. Zabokrtsky added that there is a recruitment plan in place, however no discussions regarding hiring incentives like at the Department of Corrections has been instituted.

Zabokrtsky encouraged feedback at dustin.zabokrtsky@nebraska.gov. He would like ideas on enhancing best practices, care, outreach, and closing gaps. He answered questions regarding funding and the desire to move towards a new different model for YRTC.

15. Public Comment

Chair Jeanne Brandner opened the floor for public comment. Tom McBride noted that the Juvenile Justice Association is producing podcasts, and looking for topic ideas. Members can send ideas to Tom McBride. Also, McBride reminded the members that May 6, 7, and 8 is the Juvenile Justice conference in Kearney.

16. New Business

Chair Jeanne Brandner shared that Adam Anderson will send out a table of openings for each Committee, whether or not a Commission Member is needed, desired start date, etc.

17. Upcoming Meeting Planning

- a. May 19, 2020 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
- b. August 18, 2020 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
- c. November 17, 2020 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

18. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson