

Nebraska Children's Commission Meeting

November 1, 2022
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Graduate Hotel
141 North 9th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Melissa Nance welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. She asked Adam Anderson to call roll and attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Introductions and Roll Call

Commission Members Present (8)

<i>Proxy for</i> Jarren Breeling,	Rachael Folds	Melissa Nance
<i>Veronique Claudio</i>	Ron Giesselmann	Felicia Nelsen
Kathy Dinkel	Richard Hasty	Susan Thomas

Commission Members Absent (7)

A'Jamal Byndon	Sara Hoyle	LaShawn Young
Vernon Davis	Terri Knutson	
Misty Flowers	Lana Temple-Plotz	

Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (5)

Jennifer Carter	Monika Gross	LaDonna Jones-Dunlap
Senator Myron Dorn	Judge Roger Heideman	Deb VanDyke-Ries

Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (6)

Stephanie Beasley	Sheri Dawson	Senator Patty Pansing Brooks
Jeanne Brandner	Senator Jen Day	

Roll call was taken and a quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (5)

Amanda Adams.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
Adam Anderson.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
Veronique Claudio.....	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Laura Opfer.....	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Ivy Svoboda.....	Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers

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 at the sign-in table and on the Children's Commission Website.

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

FOR (8):

Proxy for Jarren Breeling,
Veronique Claudio
Kathy Dinkel

Rachael Folds
Ron Giesselmann
Richard Hasty

Melissa Nance
Felicia Nelsen
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (7):

A'Jamal Byndon
Vernon Davis
Misty Flowers

Sara Hoyle
Terri Knutson
Lana Temple-Plotz

LaShawn Young

MOTION CARRIED

Note that the order of items in the minutes will not be reflective of the original agenda

4. Approval of the Consent Agenda

- a. [August 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes](#)
- b. [Member Nomination Report](#)

It was moved by Susan Thomas and seconded by Felicia Nelsen to approve the Consent Agenda items. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Proxy for Jarren Breeling,
Veronique Claudio
Kathy Dinkel

Rachael Folds
Ron Giesselmann
Richard Hasty

Melissa Nance
Felicia Nelsen
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (7):

A'Jamal Byndon
Vernon Davis
Misty Flowers

Sara Hoyle
Terri Knutson
Lana Temple-Plotz

LaShawn Young

MOTION CARRIED

5. Executive Committee Update

Vice Chair Melissa Nance updated the Commission on the recent work of the Executive Committee. She noted that the Committee had recently been working on hiring Amanda Adams for the Policy Analyst position. She also shared that the Committee had been working to develop the Strategic Priorities and Core Values for next steps at this meeting.

Foster Care Review Office Executive Director Monika Gross updated the Committee Regarding the Open Meetings Act complaint submitted to the Attorney General's Office. She provided an overview of the complaint. She welcomed questions. Adam Anderson noted the availability of the disposition letter on the Attorney General's Website [22-M-126; Nebraska Children's Commission](#). Members discussed the disposition letter that noted the Commission should conduct all exercises in full accordance with the law.

6. Strategic Priorities SMART Goals and Core Values

Executive Committee member Richard Hasty introduced an activity regarding Strategic Priorities and Core Values. Hasty questioned the Commission how to include voices from areas further away from the location of the meeting. Adam Anderson noted that the Commission can invite any non-member to appear before the Commission virtually. He noted that members of the Commission currently cannot engage in discussion virtually outside of the Public Comment agenda item. Anderson also shared some history of the stipends available to youth participants.

Members discussed the Core Values and whether there would be enough action items to move forward regarding a diverse representation of voices at the table. Deb VanDyke-Ries speculated that perhaps smaller focus-groups across the state may make input easier and more frequent. Members took time to post written input on each of the priorities and core values displayed around the room and next steps that can be done. Written comments will be reviewed and categorized for follow-up.

7. DHHS Update

Laura Opfer shared an update regarding the consultant contractor for the practice and finance model for child welfare. She noted RFPs have been reviewed and there are upcoming interviews. Opfer shared information regarding Director Beasley's recent testimony to the HHS Committee of the legislature. Opfer added that Alternative Response (AR) cases are increasing, and on track to reach 5000 for the year as AR has expanded, and there is an overall increase in cases. Opfer clarified that due to regulatory and legal changes that expanded AR, it is not surprising that cases are increasing, due to a wider net of families that DHHS is able to serve.

a. Family Advocacy Unit

Veronique Claudio shared a PowerPoint and discussed the Family Advocacy Unit (FAU) under the Division of Children and Family Services of DHHS. She outlined the processes and the focus of the FAU. She noted that DHHS now has a process for grievances and outlined that process. She added that the FAU is collecting data regarding grievances to determine next steps. Claudio shared that the FAU also provides help navigating the available resources. Lastly, Claudio shared information regarding a 4-year project with the Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency, which is a new initiative of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the Children's Bureau. She noted that Nebraska will receive support and resources to implement a child and youth engagement model, a training and coaching model for the child welfare workforce and a training on child and youth engagement for courts, as a part of the project.

8. Probation Update

A Probation representative was not in attendance to provide an update.

9. Foster Care Review Office Annual Report

FCRO Executive Director Monika Gross shared a [PowerPoint](#) and discussed specific details about the Office and the data contained in the [annual report](#).

10. Office of the Inspector General Annual Report

Inspector General Jennifer Carter shared a [PowerPoint](#) and discussed the Office of the Inspector General for Child Welfare, its history, and provided an overview of their [annual report](#).

11. Committee Updates and Chair Vacancies

Adam Anderson shared a [handout](#) with membership listings of all the committees and their vacancies. He noted specific vacancies the B2i Committee and noted that the SFA and B2i committee are looking for Co-Chair representatives from the Nebraska Children's Commission.

Alternative Response Committee

AR Committee Co-Chair Monika Gross shared that the AR Committee met in September, and at that meeting created four workgroups: AR Oversight, Access to Legal Resources, Equitable Provision of Services, and Workforce Stabilization workgroups. She hoped that each of these groups would be formed and meet by the end of 2022.

Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee:

Adam Anderson updated the Commission regarding the recent meeting of the B2i Committee. He noted recent discussion focused on the long-term data tracking during and after B2i completion, by recommending the Youth Thrive framework by collaborating with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee:

FCRRC Co-Chair Felicia Nelsen, shared that the Committee met recently to discuss the two additional tiers to the Nebraska Caregivers Responsibility Tool. She also shared that a representative from Medicaid was in the tendance and took questions from committee members regarding Treatment Family Care, which is slated to begin in October 2023.

Juvenile Services Committee:

JSC Co-Chair Deb VanDyke-Ries discussed the recent join meeting of the JSC and Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice. She noted that the JSC has three workgroups, and shared information regarding the work of the Access to Services Workgroup that has been very active recently. She noted that the Workgroup has been exploring six solutions barriers to accessing treatment services that include: improving timely access to a robust continuum of services addressing compensation and training to attract and retain highly-skilled network providers, incentivizing collaboration on complex cases, evaluating funding structures and rates, increasing access two family supports necessary to serve youth in the home and in the community safely, and evaluating the intersection of mental health and prevention services to improve future outcomes.

Strengthening Families Act Committee:

Adam Anderson noted that the most recent meeting lacked quorum, but he indicated that discussion regarding the annual report as well as the timeline for the Normalcy Subcommittee occurred. Anderson also reminded the Commission that the SFA is searching for youth voice as well as a Co-Chairs. Felicia Nelsen shared an update regarding the work of the Normalcy Subcommittee of the SFA Committee. Ron Giesselmann also shared information regarding the Normalcy Plan and Report process.

12. Public Comment

Vice Chair Nance opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

13. New Business

Kathy Dinkel posed a question regarding parent coaching services. Vice Chair Nance noted that DHHS currently has a RFI regarding “innovative services.” Members discussed the current need for staffing of those services. Monika Gross noted that parenting education classes used to be a bundle service with supervision-only services. Members discussed the reasoning behind some of the reasons behind the unbundling of these services. Vice Chair Nance noted that she believes members posted some thoughts about this service during the Strategic Priorities

14. Upcoming Meeting Planning

- a. February 14, 2023 will be held virtually via WebEx, with an in-person location to be determined at a later date.
- b. May 9, 2023
- c. August 8, 2023
- d. November 14, 2023

15. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson