

Strengthening Families Act (SFA) Committee

June 6, 2023
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Nebraska State Office Building, Sarpy Conference Room
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair, Ron Giesselmann, called the meeting of the Strengthening Families Act (SFA) Committee to order at 10:06 AM, and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Roll call was taken through introductions.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (6):

Payne Ackerman

Proxy for Crystal Aldmeyer,
Lincoln Arneal

Deanna Brakhage

Proxy for Misty Flowers,
Tosanna Walker

Ron Giesselmann

Proxy for Sarah Nixon,
Michaela Breult

Committee Members absent (5):

Stephanie Bizzarri
Vernon Davis

Brandy Gustoff
Terri Knutson

Denisha Seals

Ex-Officio Members present (1):

Jeremy Behrends

Ex-Officio Members absent (3):

Bailey Perry
Monika Gross
Deb VanDyke-Ries

A quorum was established.

Guests In Attendance (4):

Amanda Adams
Adam Anderson
KeAyra Braithwait
Felicia Nelsen

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 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 at the sign in table and on the Nebraska Children's Commission website.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Deanna Brakhage and seconded by Ron Giesselmann to approve the agenda with an amendment of removing agenda item 7(a.) There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (6):

Payne Ackerman
Proxy for Crystal Aldmeyer,
Lincoln Arneal

Deanna Brakhage
Proxy for Misty Flowers,
Tosanna Walker

Ron Giesselmann
Proxy for Sarah Nixon,
Michaela Breault

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Stephani Bizzarri
Vernon Davis

Brandy Gustoff
Terri Knutson

Denisha Seals

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Payne Ackerman to approve the February 8, 2023 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Deanna Brakhage. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (6):

Payne Ackerman
Proxy for Crystal Aldmeyer,
Lincoln Arneal

Deanna Brakhage
Proxy for Misty Flowers,
Tosanna Walker

Ron Giesselmann
Proxy for Sarah Nixon,
Michaela Breault

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Stephani Bizzarri
Vernon Davis

Brandy Gustoff
Terri Knutson

Denisha Seals

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Report

Co-Chair Giesselmann shared recent history of the Committee and Subcommittees and plans for moving forward. He noted the work done on the Normalcy Subcommittee has done a lot of work to evaluate on out of home placements and group homes. Giesselmann also noted that they have done some talking to keep the Trafficking Subcommittee on the agenda, due to the amount of trafficking in our communities. Giesselmann did not speak much on the APPLA Subcommittee, but he notes that he sees that they are doing big work.

VI. Membership Update

Adam Anderson shared membership openings and noted that KeAyra Braithwait will be reaching out to members that will have reappointments necessary at the next Children's Commission meeting. He shared

information regarding open positions and appointment process. Anderson let the group know that if they know of anyone who would like to apply, they can apply before the next Commission meeting in July.

VII. Legislative Update

Amanda Adams noted that the Bill of Rights didn't move out of committee; however, it does not mean something couldn't happen with it next year. LB14 which expands B2i was folded into another bill. Deanna Brakhage noted the start date of January 2025. Brakhage shared more information regarding the implementation. Adams shared LR150, which looks at domestic violence and human trafficking, and may affect the Trafficking Subcommittee.

Lincoln Arneal shared information regarding the Bill of Rights. He noted that they are looking to find another champion in the Legislature for next year.

VIII. Normalcy Subcommittee

Felicia Nelsen shared that the Subcommittee is taking in the reports and dividing them into three small groups to review the plans. The small groups will then come together and share the highlights. Nelsen noted potential changes in the future regarding dividing the Normalcy Plans and Reports. She shared that the timelines for the reports will potentially change in the upcoming year.

IX. APPLA Subcommittee

Lincoln Arneal stated that the group is working with DHHS to implement Youth Thrive. The Subcommittee will be surveying foster parents to look at the barriers for getting drivers licenses. Felicia Nelsen added input about the surveys sent about barriers. Giesselmann asked follow-up questions regarding funding. Lincoln Arneal shared that Senator Don Bacon introduced federal legislation to fund this transportation program. Deanna Brakhage noted that the State has found funding and will be moving forward on the program. She shared a few details regarding implementation and noted the current piecemeal state of transportation assistance. She also noted that youth have shared interest in electric bikes and scooters.

X. Trafficking Subcommittee

Ron Giesselmann shared some plans regarding moving forward with this Subcommittee. Amanda Adams shared the history behind the plans. She noted that the Subcommittee is not needed per statute, but it is the job of the Committee. Lincoln Arneal shared that the trafficking lead at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation is changing. Giesselmann also shared some recent expansion of the definition of trafficking to include labor trafficking. Adams noted that recently states have begun to lower child labor standards.

XI. Annual Report Approval

Amanda Adams shared information regarding the recommendations. Members discussed edits to the recommendations to remove recommendation number 5. Deanna Brakhage noted that Transition Youth Advocates have been implemented. Adams will include language to note this completion.

Members discussed recommendation 6. Amanda will include language that this recommendation has improved and encourage virtual options for participation.

Members discussed and made changes to recommendation 7. Amanda will include language to reword the recommendation to recommend that the judicial branch keep track of the forms, as well as tracking common themes that are being brought up.

Members discussed and made changes to recommendation 1. Amanda will define what more systems means and what treatment services are being talked about.

Adams noted that the definition of recommendation 2 will be expanded to include additional requirements. Members noted that Normalcy across different placements may look different. Giesselmann shared examples and members discussed the individualization of normalcy. Discussed changing the term stakeholders. Amanda will reword to state that there must be person-centered, individualized plans and explain why services are denied.

Adams provided a summary of the proposed recommendations.

It was moved by Payne Ackerman to approve the annual report with edits as discussed. The motion was seconded by Proxy for Sarah Nixon, Michaela Breault. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (6):

Payne Ackerman
Proxy for Crystal Aldmeyer,
Lincoln Arneal

Deanna Brakhage
Proxy for Misty Flowers,
Tosanna Walker

Ron Giesselmann
Proxy for Sarah Nixon,
Michaela Breault

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Stephani Bizzarri
Vernon Davis

Brandy Gustoff
Terri Knutson

Denisha Seals

MOTION CARRIED

XII. Strategic Priorities Discussion

Amanda Adams shared information on the first strategy regarding the Family Engagement Subcommittee to move forward within the next year. Deanna Brakhage, Sarah Nixon, and Payne Ackerman shared interest in joining. Payne Ackerman shared interest in Co-Chairing the Subcommittee. The second strategy is evaluating community involvement efforts and reducing isolation from families. Amanda Adams will share an email with the group regarding next steps.

XIII. New Business

Co-Chair Giesselmann opened the floor to new business. There was none.

XIV. Public Comment

Misty Flowers thanked the group and Co-chairs for the meeting.

Felicia Nelsen shared thoughts regarding increasing input from youth and families regarding

XV. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. September 20, 2023

XVI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM