



**Washington State Supreme Court
Commission on Children in Foster Care
March 16, 2015
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Justice Bobbe Bridge (ret.), Washington State Supreme Court, Commission Co-Chair
Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck, Superior Court Judges' Association
Mr. Mike Canfield, Co-Chairs of Foster Parents Association of Washington
Dr. Ken Emmil, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Ms. Jeannie Kee, Foster Youth Alumni Representative
Mr. Ryan Murrey, Executive Director of Washington State CASA
Ms. Christina Parker, Chair of the NW Intertribal Council
Ms. Carrie Wayno, Attorney General's Office
Mr. Jacob D'Annunzio, Office of Public Defense

Members Not Present

Assistant Secretary Jennifer Strus (co-chair), Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration; Ms. Beth Canfield; Mr. Ryan Cummings, Youth in Foster Care Representative; Representative Ruth Kagi; Ms. Tonia Morrison, Parent Advocate Representative; Representative Mary Helen Roberts; Ms. Joanne Moore, Office of Public Defense; Mr. Jim Bamberger, Office of Civil Legal Aid

Guests

Ms. Megan Walton, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Amara; Ms. Lauri Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Ms. Hillary Madsen, Columbia Legal Services, Ms. Jill Malat, OCLA; Ms. Gina Cumbo, Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ); Ms. Catherine Pickard, Washington State Center for Court Research; Jim Theofelis, Mockingbird Society; Ms. Cindy Bricker, Administrative Office of the Courts

Staff Present

Ms. Molly Donahue, CCFC Intern, Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ)
Ms. Paula Malleck-Odegaard, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

Call to Order

Justice Bobbe Bridge called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Justice Bridge welcomed the Commission members and guests. Slight changes to the agenda as people trickle in from other meetings in the area. Ms. Lippold is on a tight schedule, so we will fit her in when she arrives.

Ms. Carrie Wayno moved to approve the September and December minutes, and Mr. Mike Canfield seconded. The motion was put to a vote, and the minutes were approved as drafted.

Amara – Child & Family Focused Court Steering Committee

Ms. Megan Walton reminded the group that in December, they were waiting on legislation to be written by Representative Kagi. Working now to pilot project targeting kids and families. The bill dropped in January, and included training and support for legal team, and an evaluation piece. Asked for a year of planning to get the model right. Private funders are interested in funding (project called One Family, One Team model).

Ms. Walton passed around a copy of the proviso approved by Representative Kagi, as well as a membership list of the Steering Committee. Justice Bridge added that the focus will be primarily on child welfare. Building upon the FJCIP is more of a continuation or second step. She also commented on the financial outlook of the project (detailed in the proviso).

Ms. Wayno asked for a clarification on the proviso. Justice Bridge explained that the bill was not passed, so the bill is referenced in the budget proviso that Ms. Walton provided. HB 1724 was a negotiated bill, and it should serve as our framework moving forward.

WA-QIC Update

Justice Bridge introduced the new project manager for the QIC program, Ms. Gina Cumbo. Ms. Cumbo is returning to CCYJ after a few years of private practice. This is the fifth and final year of the QIC study. March marks the end of data collection – the study concludes at the end of this month. Study of the data will extend for the next six months. Results of the study will ideally be available in the fall.

Looking ahead, CITA (Court Improvement Training Academy) will continue to run their Communities of Practice around the state. The funding extends through the next six months, and allows for those communities to build additional competencies to move forward independently once the program ends in the fall.

There will be a half-day celebration and meeting to present the results of the study, and celebrate the hard work of all involved. More information on that event will be distributed closer to the fall. Justice Bridge added that the rate of compliance for this program is remarkably high. Ms. Jill Mallet added that Mr. Jim Bamberger and she will be meeting with CITA to facilitate OCLA involvement to continue the Communities of Practice.

Washington State Center for Court Research

Ms. Catherine Pickard distributed slides of her presentation. She is looking at children who have different avenues and trajectories into the juvenile justice system. Ms. Pickard presented some data on child welfare system involvement – the history of interactions of the 30,000 children who make up the 2010 cohort. Justice Bridge remarked that this number is part of a huge decline in the trends. Used to be 50 or 60K. She highlighted some disproportionality in the demographic breakdown of the cohort.

Mr. Ken Emmil posed a question about seeing the data at a school district level (right now it is presented at the county level). Ms. Pickard replied that they did have that data, and exploring at that level is on the horizon. Different school districts handle truancy in different ways.

Mr. Murrey asked about progression of events. Are they exploring trends across the state in terms of what happens and in what order? Justice Bridge wondered what, if any, impact the military presence has on the data coming out of Kitsap County.

Ms. Pickard explained some of the interpretations of the data, and how we can use this information moving forward. She also shared some example stories of youth involved in multi-systems, and expressed interest in pursuing more details to connect the data with real people.

Legislative Update

Ms. Lauri Lippold indicated that the legislative update – all 95 pages of it – was emailed before the meeting. She drew particular attention to:

- Extended Foster Care legislation – both house and senate bills are still alive, HB 1735. It has a delay attached to it - it would go into effect July 2016. Youth with a medication condition – difficult to determine a fiscal note.
 - HB 1735 will be heard in the Senate Human Services, Mental Health, and Housing Committee on March 16, at 10:00 a.m.
- HB 1672: Relating to information related to reports of child abuse and neglect – passed years ago, and has not been implemented. Would cost \$4 million to uphold. Motion is to strike the rule. Passed the house, heard in the senate last week.
- HB 1883: Relating to investigations and family assessments in cases of child abuse and neglect. FAR – bill is dead.
- SB 5692: Relating to permanency plans of care for dependent children. Has passed the house, waiting to be scheduled in the senate.
- HB 1999 relating to foster youth education outcomes. This bill creates lofty, but important goals for our state – specifically, it aims to make Washington #1 in the nation for foster care high school graduation rates, enrollment in postsecondary education, and completion of postsecondary education. The state hopes to do this through greater advocacy for foster youth to eliminate barriers to education access and success; consultation with schools and DSHS caseworkers to develop education plans for and with participating youth; and monitoring education progress and providing interventions to improve attendance, behavior, and course performance of participating youth.
- HB 1879: Relating to directing the health care authority to issue a request for proposals for integrated managed health and behavioral health services for foster children.
- HB 1932: Relating to improving medication management for youth – dead, but this will likely become an amendment to HB 1879 above.
- HB 2106 – Private contracts? Implementation of part II has been amended – December 1, 2016
- SB 5486: Relating to creating the parents for parents program (dependency 101).
 - Justice Bridge wants to see some data on this program – NCJ/FCJ did a study recently.
- HB 1800: Relating to filing a petition seeking termination of parental rights. Has been amended to relate to contact in the 12-month period of time.

Normalcy Workgroup

Ms. Jeannie Kee reminded the Commission that in 2013, they recommended that a mythbuster be created. As of a few weeks ago, it has been published and sent out. It includes basic suggestions on what the common myth is, and how to address it when it comes up as a caregiver. The Normalcy group has been working to make a youth friendly version of this form that speaks directly to children.

Other topics that are being discussed by the workgroup include: cell phone and computer usage in foster homes – trouble with requiring across foster families and belief systems. The workgroup will also start looking at Group Home Normalcy.

Children's Representation Workgroup

Justice Bridge introduced Ms. Lisa Kelly from the Children and Youth Advocacy Clinic and the chair of the newly reconstituted Children's Representation Workgroup. Ms. Kelly summarized the scope of the new workgroup as investigating the three Rs – requesting counsel, referring counsel, and retaining counsel for children in dependency.

Ms. Kelly reported that the workgroup met last week, determined a work plan, and identified other stakeholders it would like to have at the table. The work plan includes teams of constituency groups who will work on the assigned tasks, and then come back together. Their goal is to have something to the Commission by August. If there are bigger, outstanding issues, they will continue moving forward.

Ms. Bricker asked if anyone on the courts is represented on the workgroup. Realistically, legislators won't serve on the workgroup but Ms. Kelly, Justice Bridge, and Ms. Donahue are meeting Wednesday to figure out who else to get on board. Ms. Kee offered a recommendation for a foster alum representative.

New Business

Ms. Donahue updated the Commission of the planning of the Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit. The August Commission meeting has been set for August 26, though the location and time are still yet to be determined. The Commission meeting would be held in the evening during that week. She also reminded the Commission members that there is a slight time change for the May meeting: it will be from 2 p.m.-5 p.m. rather than the usual 1 p.m.-4 p.m. at the Temple of Justice.

Ms. Moore and Ms. Bricker reported to the Commission on the Paternity Project. Ms. Bricker discussed the next steps after the pilot project concludes. They are hoping to demonstrate with the pilots that the process will save money for the state and the counties in the short and the long run. The pilot is run through the AOC. Ms. Bricker offered to report back on this at the October or December meeting.

Mr. Canfield noted that Washington State has dropped from about 6,300 to 5,100 to 4,800 available and certified foster homes. Justice Bridge asked what recruitment efforts are being enacted? Mr. Canfield postulated that the rising cost of administering foster care has eliminated

homes and kept families from becoming foster parents. Research shows that foster parent loses about \$2,000 a year per foster child, and hopefully based on new legislation in July the hope is that we can get that number back into the positive. Liability issues are also barriers, as well as who qualifies to be foster parents. Justice Bridge reported that many same-sex couples are starting to get into the foster game, or show interest in joining the foster parent ranks.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Justice Bridge adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m. She thanked the Commission members for their service and commitment.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Donahue, CCYJ