



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

**KANSAS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL**  
Custody to Transition

May 31, 2022

## **Kansas Citizen Review Panel – Custody to Transition Annual Report**

The Kansas Citizen Review Panel – Custody to Transition is one of the three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in the state of Kansas. This report summarizes the work of our panel of volunteer members for June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022. Citizen Review Panels were established under the Child Abuse Treatment and Prevention Act (CAPTA). The work of all three panels in Kansas operate in accordance with CAPTA requirements.

While reviewing the child welfare process from intake to petition, custody to transition, and review of child fatalities, each panel sets priorities and creates activities that reflect their unique perspective of the child welfare system. Working together, they ensure the consumer voice is represented in ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of all Kansas children. All the panel members are tasked with taking discussions and findings from meetings back to their communities to collaborate and network on a deeper level for the benefit of children and families in Kansas.

This panel of key stakeholders and expert professionals on child welfare issues is tasked with reviewing the policies, procedures, and practice of the state child welfare system from when youth enter custody to when they transition out of care. This panel also assesses and assists the state in determining if they have met their child protection responsibilities to ensure the consumer voice is included in assessing system effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

Central to the efforts is ensuring that consumer and community voices are providing guidance on how the state can build on successes and continue to improve the child protection system. The panel ensures both the feedback and the knowledge gathered regarding interventions and innovative approaches is readily available to those making policy decisions regarding youth in care. The panel is a ready resource of qualitative information for our state and federal partners.

For Kansas, it means we have:

- A forum for citizens, families, youth, providers and professionals;
- Opportunities to assess and review relevant data about children in care, and outcomes post care;
- A network of individuals who understand the work of the child protection system;
- An ability to keep focus on the trends and key issues related to this work;
- A statewide and broad perspective about the system, in part, by ensuring diverse panel membership;
- A diminished sense of isolation among organizations and individuals facing challenges in strengthening families; and
- Networks of panel members who will help educate the public about the child protection system.

The Custody to Transition CRP meets a minimum of every three months, as well as an additional meeting convened each summer, which serves as a joint meeting with the other two Citizen Review Panels (a total of four meetings per year). Each meeting provides a valuable opportunity for the panels to evaluate the child welfare system and work to make

recommendations for improvement. In addition to the regularly scheduled panel meetings during 2021, the Custody to Transition panel also established three sub-committees to further focus on three central topics; Staff Recruitment and Retention, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and Child Welfare Partnerships with Universities. Each sub-committee met two times to discuss their topics and review relevant research. These sub-committees were established at the Joint CRP Retreat in August 2021 through strategic facilitated discussions that indicated the need for more emphasis or focus on these topics.

Another exciting development during the reporting year was the establishment of a panel chairwoman. Sharilyn Ray, LMSW, was voted as the Custody to Transition Panel Chairwoman unanimously on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022. Ray has been practicing as a licensed social worker since 2013. She not only works in child welfare but is a foster and adoptive parent. She is the CEO and Founder of Restoration Family Services, that was licensed as a child placing agency in 2018. She along with others are attempting to change the current child welfare system for the better. This includes equity and reducing the disproportionate number of children of color in care, while also reducing the number of children; regardless of race, removed unnecessarily from their home or origin.

To ensure progress and forward movement connected to our scope of work (from when the child enters state custody to when the child exits), the panel aims to focus on the most innovative and promising programming and approaches to improve the child protection system. Specifically, the panel acts as the catalyst and convener for identifying promising practices to improve the child protection system. The CRP members are charged with looking for opportunities in their environments or communities where approaches can be developed, implemented and managed. This model also complements the work of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force and CRP/Intake to Petition Panel. With the continued spread and threat of COVID-19, the panel continued to meet virtually in 2021. Meeting virtually has continued to allow for higher membership attendance. Even as the threat of COVID-19 subsides, the panel has expressed interest in continuing to meet virtually for most meetings, as efficiencies have been established and identified through remote work. We will still try to convene in person once or twice a year as well.

## Kansas Citizen Review Panel Custody to Transition Panel Member Roster 2020-2021

Member Categories	Current Member	Organization, Location	Email	Phone	Term Ends (6/30)
Parent/Parent Group Rep.	Nina Shaw Woody	KFAN	nina@kfaninc.net	316-264-2415	2019*
Child Advocacy Group Rep.	Kelly Durkin	Lifehouse Child Advocacy Center, Topeka	kdurkin@lifehousecac.com	785-232-5433	2021*
Kansas Child Advocate	Kerrie Lonard	Kansas office of the Child Advocate	Kerrie.lonard@ks.gov	785-979-4960	DCF Appointee
Child Welfare State Agency	Melinda Kline	DCF, Topeka	melinda.kline@ks.gov	785.368.8191	Appointee
Child Welfare State Agency	Ann Goodall	DCF, Topeka	Ann.goodall@ks.gov	785-250-8113	Appointee
Child Welfare Contractor	Danielle Bartelli	KVC	dbartelli@kvc.org	913-956-5211	Appointee
Child Welfare Contractor	Candace Johnson	St. Francis Ministries	Candace.johnson@st-francis.org	316-831-0330 x2653	Appointee
Child Welfare Contractor	Linda Street	St. Francis Ministries	Linda.street@saintfrancisministries.org	785-787-5900	2024*
Child Welfare Contractor	Brandy Tofel	TFI	Brandy Tofel <btofel@tfffamily.org>	785-331-5388	
Education Advocate	Malissa Martin	Communities in Schools of Mid America	malissa.martin@cismidamerica.org	785-764-0280	2024*
Formerly in Care	Sarah Henning	UDS 501	shenning@tps501.org	620-794-9483	2019*
Formerly in Care	Recruiting				
Health Care Professional	Jennifer Hansen	Child Abuse Pediatrician, Children's Mercy	jbhansen@cmh.edu	816-983-6809	2022*
Health Care Professional	Emily Killough	Child Abuse Pediatricians, Children's Mercy	efkillough@cmh.edu	816-234-9429	2022*
Guardian Ad Litem					
Substance Abuse Counselor					
Community Volunteer	Justine Burton	Stop Gap Inc., Lawrence	Stopgapinc.org@gmail.com	785-856-7833	2022*
Office of Judicial Administration	Dena Russell-Marino	OJA	marinod@kscourts.org	620-757-3223	OJA Appointee
Tribal Representative	Sandra Shopteese	Tribal Specialist DCF	Sandra.Shopteese@ks.gov	785-296-0573 or 785 966-3135	2024*
Works with Children in Care	Sharilyn Ray (Panel Chair)	Restoration Family Services	sharilynray@hotmail.com	316-789-6022	2021*
Works with Children in Care	Tara James-Wallace	KS African American Foster/Adoption Coalition	tara.james.wallace@gmail.com	785-554-1299	2021*
Works with Homeless Youth	Linda Long	USD 261	llong@usd261.com	316-554-2251 x1409	2019 *
Advisory Member	Kellie Hans Reid	CareSource	Kellie.hansReid@caresource.com	785-207-2502	2020 *
Advisory Member	Sara Hortenstine	KS Child Death Review Board	Sara.Hortenstine@ag.ks.gov	785-296-7970	Appointee
CRP Coordinator	Taylor Forrest	Mainstream Nonprofit Solutions	tforrest@tfffamily.org	620-412-7569	
CRP Support	Hettie Wilson	Mainstream Nonprofit Solutions	hwilson@tfffamily.org	620-794-4079	

*\*eligible for another 4-year term*

# *Custody to Transition Subcommittee Workgroups*

## Recruitment and Retention

Danielle Bartelli  
Linda Long  
Brandy Tofel  
Linda Street  
Malissa Martin  
Jenn Hansen  
Sharilyn Ray

## Universities

Sandra Shopteese  
Sharilyn Ray  
Tara James-Wallace

## DEI Framework

Tara James-Wallace  
Sharilyn Ray  
Melinda Kline  
Emily Killough  
Sara Hortenstine

## CRP Custody to Transition Meeting Overviews

### June 11, 2021

**Focus:** The Custody to Transition panel received a synopsis and overview of the CRP Annual Conference from the CRP Facilitators. Additionally, the Facilitators conducted a Needs Assessment to improve panel function.

**Overview:** On June 11, 2021, the Custody to Transition panel convened via Zoom. The meeting began with a discussion about the need for panel chair. Nina Shaw-Woody had been the chair for the past couple years and was stepping down from the role. The panel also discussed the submission of the 2021 Custody to Transition Annual Report. The panel then moved into general discussion updates where it was communicated that having more drug and alcohol services that are in an individual's home, rather than expecting them to go to a different location, would be beneficial. DCF provided an update that all DCF offices would officially re-open to the public on June 14, but state employees would still do a hybrid of remote/in-person work. Team-Decision Making meetings were expanded to other regions across the state. Danielle Bartelli discussed the topic of timely reunifications. Providers have focused on a goal of timely reunification within 12 months of referral. She would like to see courts and attorneys be able to better collaborate to help reach these goals, as sometimes they can become a barrier to positive outcomes. After general updates and an overview of the CRP Annual Conference, the Facilitators conducted a needs assessment to better improve the panel. The key takeaways from that Needs Assessment were:

- One of the panels biggest strengths is a diverse group of panel members and everyone is passionate about this topic.
- Many on the panel felt that sometimes they felt the panel was a little directionless. There is a need for more data-driven decision making by the panel and a need to set strategic objectives for each year.

### August 27, 2021

**Focus:** Each year, all three of the Kansas Citizen Review Panels hold a joint meeting to collaborate and strategize. The focus of this meeting was receiving a presentation from Children's Alliance on their Kinship Caregiver Training and a presentation from DCF on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI). At the Joint CRP Retreat, each panel also identified their strategic objectives for the upcoming year through collaboration & discussion.

**Overview:** On August 27, 2021, a joint meeting between the Kansas Citizen Review Panels (Intake to Petition, Custody to Transition, & Child Death Review Board) was held via Zoom. The meeting started with a presentation from Sherrie Gross on the Kansas Practice Model. They also discussed the Team Decision Making and Family Finding. Overall, through the Kansas Practice Model, they are striving to build critical thinking within DCF and through their practitioners. After this presentation, each panel separated to enter a strategic planning session.

During this planning session, each panel discussed challenges, barriers and then identified key focus areas or strategic objectives for the year.

The Custody to Transition panel decided to focus on the following topic areas:

- Staff recruitment and retention
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- University partnerships

The Intake to Petition/CJA Task Force decided to focus on the following topic:

- Exploring a child welfare training clearinghouse
- Having a CJA sub-grantee attend each panel meeting to give an update on their progress

Following the strategic planning session, Shanelle Dupree, Kansas City Regional Director, and Brandi Turner, DCF DEI Officer, presentation on DEI efforts within DCF. To wrap up the CRP Joint Retreat, Children's Alliance provided an overview of their Kinship Caregiver Training.

## **November 12, 2021**

**Focus:** The Custody to Transition panel reviewed the Strategic Goals from the Joint CRP Retreat. At this meeting, the panel decided to establish three workgroups to look at the topics closer: Staff Recruitment & Retention; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI); Partnerships with Universities.

**Overview:** On November 12, 2021, the Custody to Transition panel convened via Zoom. The meeting began with general updates. These updates included a reminder about the need for a panel chair, 2022 meeting dates and format of meetings moving forward. Panel members then updated on challenges and service delivery. During this time, Sharilyn Ray emphasized the need for continued conversation about racial disparities in child welfare. Brandy Tofel stated that turnover and lack of qualified candidates continues to be a challenge. Ann Goodall provided a DCF update. During this update she informed the panel about the Crisis Response hotline for families. This is a statewide number individuals can access when in a crisis that might not reach the level of calling 911. Linda Street told Ann she had heard of case teams who had tried to use the hotline, but were told to take the child to the local mental health center. Ann also updated the panel that the DCF office now has a Pack n' Play in every office to help with safe sleep practices. DCF also communicated that they have been able to safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home placement by approximately 1,000 children since 2017. After the DCF update, the panel recapped their strategic objectives from the CRP Joint Retreat and then identified three separate workgroups or sub-committees.

## **February 4, 2022**

**Focus:** The Custody to Transition panel workgroups reported out for the first time on their individual focuses. Additionally, the panel received an overview and presentation from the newly established Division of the Child Advocate. Finally, the panel received a legislative update on relevant legislation from the Children’s Alliance.

**Overview:** On February 4, 2022, the Custody to Transition panel convened via Zoom. The meeting began with a vote for Sharilyn Ray as the new panel chair. Nina Shaw-Woody made the first motion and Brandy Tofel seconded, vote was unanimous, and motion passed. The meeting then moved into general updates on service delivery and challenges from panel members. Malissa Martin announced Communities in Schools received a \$4 million dollar grant from McKinsey Scott. Linda Long updated on a school-based health clinic partnership with KU Med that started in the Haysville school district. She said it has been a big success because they are seeing a lot of kids, regardless of their ability to pay or their access to KanCare. Nina Shaw-Woody announced that DCF, KFAN and the Center for States will be presenting on the Kinship Navigator Program in April at the Child Welfare League of American Conference. Lana Goetz communicated that the Honorable Leonard Edwards will be presenting on reasonable efforts and relative placement in April. She provided the link to the training. Candace Johnson and Melinda Kline discussed the uptick of out-of-home referrals in Sedgwick counties. Ann Goodall also announced the KPRC hotline revised some of their call prompts to adjust the flow. Next, the three sub-committees (Staff Recruitment and Retention; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and University Partnership) reported out on their last meeting. Following these reports, Kerrie Lonard with the Kansas Division of the Child Advocate, presented on the newly established division. The meeting concluded with a legislative update from Shanna Jager with the Children’s Alliance.

## **April 1, 2022**

**Focus:** The Custody to Transition panel focused on identifying recommendations for the 2022 Custody to Transition Annual Report. The panel also received a presentation on the Mobile Crisis Hotline from Beacon Mobile.

**Overview:** On April 1, 2022, the Custody to Transition panel convened via Zoom. The meeting began with Taylor announcing the National CRP Conference. Panel members were encouraged to attend if they were able. Next, Beacon Mobile provided a presentation on the Crisis Hotline. Then each sub-committee reported out on their last meetings. Lastly, the panel moved into discussing barriers and challenges within the child welfare system and prioritizing their recommendations for the 2022 Annual Report.

*\*For complete meeting minutes and member attendance, see Appendix A*



## Recommendations and Opportunities for Future Work

As required by Section 106(c)(6) of CAPTA, the Citizen Review Panel must provide recommendations to improve the child protective system at state and local levels. The Kansas CRPs remain strong partners with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and are committed to working with the agency on the following recommendations to further aid in system-wide child protective outcomes.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

#### **Recommendation #1 – Invest time and resources to partner with an outside consultant to conduct an in-depth evaluation of DCF policies, procedures, programming, and data regarding DEI, disproportionality, implicit bias and institutional racism.**

The Custody to Transition panel recognizes the progress DCF has made in this area by instituting a DEI officer and starting important conversations with the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative. While this is movement in the right direction, the panel believes an in-depth evaluation of DCF policies, procedures, programming, and data is vital to create meaningful change regarding DEI, disproportionality, implicit bias and institutional racism. The panel recommends a top-down evaluation of the entire state agency to ensure a comprehensive, systemic approach. Additionally, for this process to remain unbiased, the panel recommends utilizing an objective outside consultant to conduct the review.

The issue of racial disparity, disproportionality and racism in the child welfare system requires immediate attention. Nationwide, in 2019, African American children accounted for approximately 14 percent of the child population and 23 percent of the foster care population (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020a; Children's Bureau, 2020b). In Kansas, 19.7 percent of children in out-of-home care were African American, when African American children account for approximately only 6 percent of the child population in Kansas (*Children in out of Home Placement by Race*) (*Child Population by Race: Kids Count Data Center*).

Disproportionality isn't just affecting out-of-home placement. It is also affecting permanency outcomes, "*Relative to other children, African-American children spend more time in foster care (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007a) and are less likely to reunify with their families (Lu et al., 2004), and compared with White children, they are less likely to receive services (Garcia et al., 2016).*"

To address these issues and create meaningful change for Kansas children, the Custody to Transition panel strongly recommends acting on the recommendation above.

#### **Recommendation #2 – Implement a state-wide blind removal staffing process to reduce unnecessary, disproportionate removal of Black children from their homes, decreasing harm and trauma to the family unit.**

In addition to engaging in a comprehensive review of the state child welfare system, the Custody to Transition panel highly recommends DCF implement a blind removal staffing process to reduce the disproportionate removal of black children from their homes. Having cases or families evaluated by committees, rather than individual caseworkers, could mitigate

implicit bias.

In 2009, a blind removal process was established by Nassau County in New York. At the time the grant was awarded, Black children in the state of New York were 2.2 times more likely to be the subject of a report of maltreatment, 2.3 times more likely to have a substantiated case of abuse and/or neglect, 3.6 times more likely to be removed from their home, and 4 times more likely to be in foster care, when compared to white children. In Nassau County specifically, Black children were 15 times more likely to be placed in out-of-home care than their white peers (*Blind Removals Process, Casey*).

Moving from an individual caseworker approach to a blind committee approach allowed for them to address the impact of bias not just regarding race and ethnicity, but also against families that had frequent or multigenerational involvement in the child welfare system.

Nassau County tracked the data for five years and the results illustrated an improvement in disproportionality. The rates started at 55.5 percent of black children being removed from their homes, and it reduced to 29 percent (*Pryce*).

The Custody to Transition panel recommends DCF explore implementing a similar process to address disproportionality in removal rates. This approach could not only address the impact of bias but could serve as a positive prevention tool as well. Having a group convene to address removal could help identify other services and supports available to keep the child(ren) safely out of foster care and with their biological family. The Custody to Transition panel knows that implementing the exact same process from Nassau County would not work, but instead is asking DCF to look for a similar process that would best fit Kansas.

## **Child Welfare Staff Recruitment & Retention**

### **Recommendation #3 – Increase salaries for all frontline child welfare staff. Additionally, invest to create more comprehensive benefit packages for all frontline child welfare staff.**

Having a strong and robust workforce is vitally important to improving outcomes for Kansas children and families. While staff turnover has been a prevalent issue for quite some time, the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused additional strain on the child welfare workforce. The Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) recently reported that turnover in child welfare before the pandemic was 6 times the national average for other types of jobs. (QIC-WD, 2018). Other national data suggest that the annual turnover rate in child welfare agencies ranges between 20 and 40 percent, with some areas having turnover rates as high as 90-100 percent during the pandemic.

While there are many areas in child welfare that need focus, it has become increasingly evident that without strengthening the workforce, minimal improvements will actually be made or recognized. The need for more funding for staff salaries is desperately needed. While inflation has continued to rise, salaries for Kansas social workers has remained stagnant.

Kansas reflects only a 9% increase in salary for child welfare social workers over the past 10 years, compared to a national media average increase of 20 percent (*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*.)

The poor salary range, paired with the difficulty and stressors of the job, has created a workforce issue that direly needs to be addressed. In 2016, Texas DFPS implemented several key strategies to improve caseworker turnover, one of which was increasing salaries. Through appropriation, DFPS was able to give caseworkers a \$1,000 per month increase and smaller increases for supervisors, regional directors, program director and administrators. Increasing resources and salaries was not the only strategy implemented but was a key focus. In a one-year period, DFPS saw a decrease in overall turnover from 25.4 percent to 18.4 percent. This decrease in turnover also drove down caseloads and improved outcomes (*Reducing Caseworker Turnover*).

The Custody to Transition Panel strongly recommends increasing child welfare staff salaries, regardless of whether they work for the State of Kansas or a privatized contractor. While part of the RFP process is establishing competitive salaries for staff to complete the work, it might be beneficial for DCF to consider or investigate whether it should set minimum salaries for frontline workers in the bidding process.

Not only are more adequate salaries needed, but the Custody to Transition panel also recommends investing funds to create more comprehensive benefits packages for all frontline child welfare staff. This could look like:

- Longevity Bonuses
- Milestone Bonuses
- More paid time off
- Work flexibility
- Paid paternity/maternity leave (The panel is aware the State of Kansas offers paid maternity and paternity leave for state workers, but most contractors do not offer this benefit, which affects the entirety of the child welfare workforce)

**Recommendation #4 – Invest resources to create a more supportive staff environment and reduce secondary trauma and burnout. This includes increase funding for mental health services for child welfare staff.**

Simply investing in child welfare salaries will not be enough to build a robust workforce. By the nature of the work, Kansas child welfare staff deal with emotional, difficult situations. As a result of their occupation, they deal with a tremendous amount of secondary trauma, which can lead to burnout and staff turnover. The Custody to Transition panel strongly urges the Kansas Department for Children and Families and other stakeholders to invest resources to create supportive staff environments and prioritize workforce mental health services for child welfare workers.

The Custody to Transition Panel also recommends DCF explore implementing a peer support group for child welfare workers to better deal with secondary trauma and stress. Mentorship and peer support is a proven strategy of improving staff satisfaction & resilience (*Reducing Caseworker Turnover*).

With many of the recommendations made above, it will require appropriation or funding from the Kansas Legislature. While this burden doesn't lie with DCF alone, the state communicates regularly with the legislature about budgetary needs. The Custody to Transition panel implores DCF to utilize this report to illustrate the need for more funding & resources to create a robust workforce for Kansas child welfare. Without prioritizing workforce, the panel believes outcomes

will continue to suffer and will create barriers to creating a strong child welfare system.

## Annual Report Conclusions

The Kansas Citizen Review Panel – Custody to Transition members remain committed to ensuring the citizen and community voice is a part of shaping and improving the child protection and child welfare system. Working with DCF, we will continue to be an important source of information that is a valuable component of policy and practice development. We will continue to look for ways to increase the relevance of our work and invite agency leaders to do the same.

For more information on the content of the report, contact: Taylor Forrest at [tforrest@tfifamily.org](mailto:tforrest@tfifamily.org).

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Taylor Forrest, Coordinator – Kansas Citizen Review Panels*

## References/Appendix

*Children in out of Home Placement by Race and ... - Dcf.ks.gov.*

[http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2022DataReports/FCAD\\_Summary/RacebyCounty\\_FY22.pdf](http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2022DataReports/FCAD_Summary/RacebyCounty_FY22.pdf).

“Child Population by Race: Kids Count Data Center.” *KIDS COUNT Data Center: A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/103-child-population-by-race#detailed/2/18/false/574/68,69,67,12,70,66,71,72/423,424>.

“What Are Blind Removal Meetings? – Dr. Jessica Pryce.” *Dr Jessica Pryce*, <https://jessicaprycephd.com/what-are-blind-removal-meetings/>.

“Reducing Caseworker Turnover.” *Casey Family Programs*, 3 Sept. 2021, <https://www.casey.org/texas-turnover-reduction/>.

“Blind Removals Process.” *Casey Family Programs*, 11 Jan. 2022, <https://www.casey.org/blind-removals-nassau/>.

“Social Workers : Occupational Outlook Handbook.” *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 18 Apr. 2022, <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>.

“Turnover.” *Turnover | Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development*, <https://www.qic-wd.org/topics/turnover>.

**Kansas Citizen Review Panel: Custody to Transition**  
**June 11, 2021**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**10:00 a.m. Panel Meeting Begins**

**Panel Attendance:** Kelly Durkin, Candace Johnson, Sandra Shopteese, Malissa Martin, Jennifer Gassman, Ann Goodall, Jenn Hansen, Brandy Tofel, Nina Shaw-Woody, Melinda Kline, Sara Hortenstine, Danielle Bartelli, Dena Marino, Tara Wallace

**Panel Support:** Taylor Forrest, Eva Harkness

**Welcome & Introductions**

- **Brief announcements/invitations**
  - Eva Harkness was introduced as the new panel support staff member. If panel members have questions, they can still contact Taylor directly, or they can reach out to Eva as well.
  - Panel member changes/Panel Chair –There was discussion about about the current panel chair was. Ann stated that it changes yearly if someone steps up. Candace added that Nina has been chair for more than a couple of years and that she might be happy to step down from the position, but it was not known if someone else was able to take it on. Taylor asked if there was a special process for setting up a new chair. Ann stated that it was generally a verbal statement of volunteering for the position that initiated the change.
  - Taylor provided a reminder about the upcoming National CRP Webinar on Monday, June 14 and informed the panel that both she and Eva would be attending.
  - It was verified the date of Aug. 27 still works for the Joint CRP Retreat. The tentative plan is to have it at the Shawnee County Library and the panel agreed that the event should be a hybrid option to meet the needs of attendees.
  - 2021 Annual Report – The Custody to Transition 2021 Annual Report was submitted at the end of May. Panelists were sent a copy through email. Taylor stated that she was still waiting for the response from DCF. She asked Ann if she knew what the timeline was on a response. Ann said she thought there were 60 days to respond and didn't know if it was Melinda or Tanya who responded the previous year. It was discussed where the Annual Report is housed publicly, Taylor asked if it is on the DCF website. Ann said that they put them in with the state plan with a link to the Annual Report on the website, but that they did not have their own spot on the DCF website, but she would talk with their Communications team about this. Taylor contributed the idea of having it under the CAPTA information. Ann was going to check on how this could be done and if

it was feasible.

### **10:15 a.m. Panel Member Updates**

- **General updates from members on service delivery, challenges, and resources**
  - Danielle stated that there was always a need for more drug and alcohol services and that it would be good to get such delivered directly within the parents' homes rather than parents having to go to another location. Melinda agreed with Danielle and added that a couple of parents had contacted customer service looking for parenting classes. Mental health services would be useful if they came to the parent home.
  - Danielle stated that they have PMTO but that they have a wait list and some limitations in addressing that need. Candace added that more mental health services were needed for adults and youth and that they continued to struggle without adequate resources in that area.
  - It was stated that some were falling between the cracks and lacked medical insurance to pay for such services independently. In Sedgewick County, group therapy is offered, but it is not always the best option when individuals need personal one-on-one time with a therapist.
  - Tara presented that she had just recently filed for non-profit status to provide services for families who do not have insurance. She is waiting to hear about it, but there is a backlog for nonprofit approvals. Tara does teach parenting classes. When the paperwork goes through for non-profit status, she will send out a message that it is official, and then people can start giving out her information.
  - Tara went on to say that parenting classes can be done virtually and that she has completed parenting trainer training through two sources.
  - Sandra said that it was fantastic that Tara was going to do virtual parenting classes in the Topeka area and asked about the titles of the classes. Tara replied that Child/Parent Relationship Training, CPRT, and the certificate training.
  - Sandra stated that because she worked primarily with tribal services and Native American children, that several of this population are in the Topeka area and have difficulty with transportation and no insurance. They are looking for parenting classes, preferring those created for Native Americans. Sandra went on to say that if Tara was interested, she should look into receiving training to teach Positive Native American Parenting. Sandra knows of a committee that is dedicated to helping Native Americans and this might be something they would be interested in paying for as a service. Tara and Sandra spoke about continuing this discussion together in the future.
- **DCF updates**
  - Melinda said that on Monday, June 14 all Kansas DCF offices would be open. There is a telework option for DCF employees and an outline of work requirements for those doing such. Hybrid in office and home will be normal in the future.

- Kristalle Hedrick's last day with DCF is today, and there is no replacement yet.
- DCF is working with providers to look at data outcomes to follow Kansas practice models. They are concentrating on working with families, family engagement, examining the trauma that occurs to children when they are separated from family, removing children from family only if there is no other way to keep them safe, and maintaining services to support family units. This is the nationwide trajectory.
- It is seen now that to keep children safe, their families must be worked with also. These systemic changes have produced a reduction in the number of children in out-of-home care in the last few years. The removal trend is moving downward, though not at the speed many would hope for.
- June is Family Reunification Month, and Melinda spoke of how happy she was that the governor signed a proclamation declaring it so.
- Ann, piggybacked off of Melinda, saying that referring to the numbers coming from examining the results of TDM meetings that mothers are attending 86%, fathers 60%, and family/friend support shows up as 70% of the time.
- TDM has rolled out to other regions and one particular judicial district in the northwest, which never would make direct placements with relatives, even when it was recommended by DCF, this district recently chose to place a child in a family member's custody after reviewing some of these statistics.
- Also, in some judicial districts they are allowing workers to have additional time before the temporary custody hearings.
- Ann reported that due to some federal stimulus dollars, 8 independent living coordinator positions were posted statewide, and these will work on the foster care re-entry program until September 30<sup>th</sup> for adults who exited care in the past year, but want to re-engage with independent living services and supports.
- Candace asked if this was for non-ppc cases only for the TC extension. Ann responded that she did not know, but didn't think it was a temporary custody extension because she was not sure they could actually do that. That it was really just a case of giving more time to do TDM before the custody hearing.
- Candace expressed she was interested in how successful it was in preventing out of home placement.
- Danielle mentioned that she was surprised to hear that TDMs have only been for cases where there has been abuse or neglect and not for FINA cases. She went on to say that teenagers would find these helpful since those kids come into care and stay in care. Ann pulled up some information on this and stated that according to the requirements, that it was a parents' behavior, whether through action or inaction, causing a threat to a child's safety that would be considered. This stated that it was more about the parent or caregiver. In the future this might be considered to be a way to extending its use.
- Danielle added that one of the things they are working on as providers is timely reunification, and reunification within 12 months of referral as outcome goals. It is a desire that courts and attorneys be helped to better understand the importance of why children should stay within their own families, rather than be

removed from them. There is a court expectation that supervised visits must first be set up and these must occur for a set amount of time before children can return to family reunification and supports. Danielle would like to see report cards given to courts or some other way, so that they would be able to see their effectiveness level of helping DCF meet their outcomes. That courts can become a barrier to positive outcomes and that it would be nice for them to understand they have a responsibility in this matter.

### **10:45 a.m. CRP Annual Conference Update**

- Taylor Forrest & Eva Harkness – Eva attended the CRP Annual Conference and provided an overview to the panel.
  - Introduction/Overview of the Conference – Day 1
    - *This was the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual National Citizen Review Panel Zoom Conference held by Ohio State University on May 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.*
    - *The National CRP Conference is dedicated to the CAPTA requirement of gathering the various state CRP groups to present, discuss, and educate participants in policies, procedures, and practices.*
    - *CRP attendees from the state of Kansas were Taylor Forrest, Valerie Leon, Ann Goodall, Angela Dunn, Tate Toedman, Eva Harkness, and Malissa Martin.*
  - Synopsis of Breakout Session “Citizen Review Panels Speaking for the Child”
    - *This session outlined Ohio’s beliefs that the information gained from child/adult foster alumni (18-24 years of age) was a credible data resource for CRP groups when they are gathering information directed towards recommendations of improvement.*
    - *It was stated that there are barriers to communication if children’s input is not gathered, as adults who have not experienced foster care tend to not perceive needs in the same way as alumni do. Such clarification helps CRP committees to have a more holistic understanding of the foster culture.*
    - *Ohio found that difficulties for children in group care were more likely if the child had gone through multiple placements, was placed in residential between 14-16 years of age and experienced rights violations while in care. The development of a universal foster care child bill of rights was*



*seen as a necessary addition to meeting children's needs within the system.*

- Synopsis of Breakout Session “Success Stories Panel”
  - *Three states presented successes, with Tennessee and Maryland stating that they found outcomes which showed a need to train foster care providers on how to adapt to the changes brought by COVID-19. Care providers were stressed resulting from children's increased home time and the need to support their online learning.*
  - *In New York, a video was made for public media to instruct those who watched it that children have the need to voice their care needs. Through this informational vehicle they went to the New York legislature to ask for expanded funding for home visits with young children.*
  
- Synopsis of “CRP 101” – Day 2
  - *The main points covered in this breakout session were that CRP committees needed to have strong objectives and goals; training was crucial. Simplicity was spoken of as being more successful at conveying ideas than complexity, quarterly meetings are required, but more meetings more often produce better results. And finally, the CRP committee should have a strong strategic plan which is followed in meeting all objectives and goals and that community forums, trends, and targeted surveys may help in gathering information needed to meet these.*
  
- Synopsis of “The Power of Youth Voice in CRPs”
  - *This presentation spoke to the use of foster alumni information, as obtained from the Nebraska Youth Advisory Group. The overall presentation was given by the young adults who served on this committee, how they set up the group, and worked to support the CRP committees in their work. Much of the set up and activities of this group matched CRP models.*
  
- Closing remarks about the conference.
  - *In closing, the hosts shared that they felt positive about the information given and that participants seemed to have gained insight into the need for the “child's” voice within CRP work.*

- After Eva’s update, it was opened up for questions/comments.
- Malissa said that she had been able to attend the event some of day one and all of day two. She had never been to one of these conferences. Being back on the panel after being off a few years and attending this conference was very informative and helpful in bringing her back to the awareness she needed for her return. In the future she expressed interest in wanting to have the opportunity to attend the conference, not only for the value of the practice sessions but also because of how beneficial it was. She said that it was great that it was virtual, but she looked forward to attending in person in the future. Ann mentioned that she thought DCF had enough CAPTA dollars that in the future that they might send a decent amount of people.
- Materials from the conference were sent out via email. Taylor asked about a OneDrive where panel materials could all be saved. Panel expressed interest in this, so Taylor will be setting up for the panel.

### 11:00 a.m. Needs Assessment on Panel Function

- The coordinators asked facilitated question to conduct a Need Assessment to better understand how the panel can function more effectively and efficiently in the coming year.
  - **What do you consider this panel’s top 3 strengths in working together and achieving goals?**
    - Candace stated that the diversity amongst panel members, both in the work that each does and their perspectives.
    - Taylor asked if a strength might be that in going virtual more people are able to attend meetings. Ann agreed and said that she knows that there are always times when folks can’t make it, but that there is a very good sense of commitment to attendance, and that this has been true even before virtual was set up; with virtual it is easier to attend. Sandra said she agreed and that she preferred the virtual.
    - Sandra considers the group’s combined years of experience service a strength also.
    - Jenn piggybacked onto the discussion of how all the diversity with commitment to go beyond work should be considered a strength.
    - Sandra spoke of how everyone’s passion and dedication speaks as a strength. Tara agreed also. Everyone has the same focus and is contributing to the same goal.
  - **How are these strengths used to meet goals/needs effectively?**
    - Brandy came in with her thought that just sharing their resources and information coming from the different opportunities each has, helps. That panel members do not all go to the same events or trainings, legislative pieces, and webinars. Not everyone has the same jobs, so everyone does a good job of sharing out the elements by bringing these

- resources and tools to meetings.
- Sandra said she thinks they all do a good job with networking and sharing resources for work within and outside the group.
  - Brandy stated that in the past, the panel had done a lot of data sharing and looked at how data improved not only work as a pane,l but also in outside work positions. She said that it is very important to have data play a role in the decisions and recommendations being made, summarizing that it is important that the panel be data-driven.
  - Sandra mentioned that in listening to fellow panelists she thinks there is a lot of creativity in problem solving.
- **What do you consider the panel’s 3 greatest challenges or barriers?**
    - Brandy answered that while she agrees the panel is diverse, she thinks there are more voices that should be at the table such as those from courts and law enforcement.
    - Melinda stated that time and resources are always going to be a barrier because time and the ability to attend, giving 100% beyond work is always going to be a struggle.
    - Sandra stated that each organization has its own acronyms, and this makes communication difficult producing a language barrier.
  - **How should each of these challenges be corrected to overcome these issues?**
    - Brandy said that a needs assessment was done in the past before her time and that panel member’s backgrounds, geographic locations, roles, experiences, and such were gathered. That this survey helped draw out what was missing or needed. It might be something to revisit.
    - Taylor asked what was done with this needs assessment or how they were used to benefit the panel? Danielle stated that she remembered the survey and that members were asked about their background, title, expertise, training, and length of time in the field. She thought it might have been done using survey monkey.
    - Sara added that the questions of who individuals were in contact with or those agencies they worked or partnered with in the child welfare field was also asked.
    - Brandy thought there may be other states with a process that they could share. Taylor said she had a mentor in Ohio that might have information.
    - Discussed diversity, especially including diversity of minorities. Taylor continued that the panel could work on getting more voices at the table by having the coordinators work on recruitment.
    - Melissa stated that to some degree time is always a struggle and that the panel should consider the perspective that technically by meeting only once a quarter it is not as difficult as the daily, weekly, and monthly meetings required of them in other areas.
  - **What can we do as coordinators do to help the panel function better?**
    - Jenn speaks up to say that in the past there has been discussion of how recommendations don’t change from year to year and that collecting

numerical and other data to support our recommendations was needed. In the past someone would facilitate data collection. Eva asked if the coordinator would be useful in gathering data through surveys of various communities to learn of specific needs the panel should consider. The panel has a diverse population that could be accessed for acquiring such information.

- Candace asked how the information would be considered different from what was gathered already through the United Way and others.
- It was discussed using the resources and community assessments that already exist.
- Jenn, spoke up with her thought that the panel would have to decide what specific data was being looked for, if it was out there that it should be collected from that source. She went on to say that if it was not out there, they all had their sources to use to gather this information. Not a global needs assessment but one that targets a specific piece.
- Candace said that as a panel, something they had not looked at were needs assessments. That they should examine what was being done and then comparing that with CMP stakeholder interview information to see what the broader issue are and then to tailor that down, rather than search a number of needs assessments and then have 20 or so panel members try to find specific needs from that mass which should be addressed.
- Jenn agreed and went on to say that while the United Ways were doing these for other communities and compiling it, the information did not seem to be extending out to other places where it could be used. There would always be overlap even when some counties had their own specific issues. That overlap would give us concrete themes which would apply throughout the state.
- Candace then said that she agreed and that though she had been on the panel for two years, the panel felt as though it was directionless. She added that they had really good conversations, and that these allow all to say that they are not alone in this, but in the past couple of years, no real creation of plans to move forward, or any recommendations where action could be seen has been achieved. This is how this plan would help us.
- Jenn said that she agreed and that she had struggled with the purpose of this panel. She understood that the collaboration and sharing piece was great, but there was no output to demonstrate that the panel provided a service.
- Candace continued with “I think that what makes the annual report so hard when Taylor asks us for our feedback is that in the past few years, we have not had objectives to drive our work.”
- Brandy added then that maybe the panel should start the year by setting out objectives. What do we want to accomplish now so that when the

- annual report comes about, we know what we have accomplished?
- Taylor brought up then that the CRP Retreat is the kick-off for the year and asked the panel if it would be helpful to set objectives at that meeting. There was consensus on that.
  - She asked the panel if there was a consensus that it the coordinators need to pull those needs assessments that already exist and then create our own to distribute throughout the panel.
  - Jenn spoke to that as being a good start, but that what was needed were specific points to be looking for within these huge community needs assessment collections. She continued by saying that we have to be specific about what data we are actually trying to find. Before the retreat meeting, ask our panels from both groups for what specific areas they want to target in the child welfare system so we can figure out what data points we need to be looking for.
  - Candace stated then that some of those things we've talked about such as what recurrent themes, barriers to permanency, access to services, access to mental health, services in the home, the disproportionality of services, we need to use these to make chewable pieces of the mass of information collected. If the coordinators can dive into those different community assessments and filter down that data for us, we would be able to see what was needed. We need to target more rural and urban needs to give us a better direction, and then we can start to figure out those next pieces.
- Taylor told the group that the next meeting will be the CRP Retreat on August 27, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The meeting will be a hybrid format, so people can either attend in person in Topeka or they can use Zoom.
  - Prior to the meeting closing, there is a discussion about the panel chair. Nina Shaw-Woody was the official panel chair for the past several years, but she feels she has no time to do the duties so another person should be found. Taylor will send out emails to solicit for a new chair. Brandy Tofel suggested that duties should be defined so that people can know what they will do in the position. Taylor says the duties haven't been clear in the past, but we can certainly define them and work on this.

### **11:30pm Meeting Adjourns**

Next Meeting Aug. 27, 2021, location will be confirmed.

## **Annual Joint Retreat of the Kansas Citizen Review Panels Meeting Minutes**

**9 a.m. – 2 p.m., August 27, 2021**

**VIRTUAL:**

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88968635308?pwd=OUxvUTNnQWx4SkpSYlJYRmw5M2ltdz09>

**Meeting ID: 889 6863 5308**

**Passcode: 918460**

**9:00 a.m. Joint Panel Meeting Begins**

- Welcome & Introductions
- Libby Hayden welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining the meeting.

**9:15 a.m. Panel Member Updates**

- General updates from members on service delivery, challenges, and resources
  - There no updates from Members currently.
  - Facilitator Libby Hayden added several attachments in the chat. (Panels Annual Reports, Survey Results from both panels on issues important to them, CRP Orientation, Updated CRP Handbook, and Retreat Agenda.
- **Kansas Practice Model – Sherrie Gross**
  - Sherrie Gross presented the new Kansas Practice model. She spoke of the key factor that we are always learning and practicing. She also spoke on several practice approaches that are we are using to come alongside families, and their natural support systems, and the community on a journey towards improved safety for families and children.
  - She also spoke on team decision making, meetings, completely and family finding. The hope is that early reunification for children or other opportunities that have been identified by family. The Kansas practice model what we're striving to do is manage that anxiety using critical thinking and developing that critical thinking within our agency and our practitioners, you know, in traditional Child Welfare Services family do often feel forced or forced to do services. And one of the things we find out is just because they said they'll do services, doesn't necessarily mean there are changes that are made, but if families really decide how they will overcome the agency and others worries, they're more invested and those changes are more likely to be less, you know, the focus and traditional is that we're going to fix everything, we're going to fix what's wrong, we're going to find a better family for children to live with. When really, in the Kansas practice model is that we're looking at what's working right with the family and building from on from that.

**10:00 a.m. Strategic Planning Session**

- Each panel separated & outlined their strategic plan & goals for the upcoming year
- Each Panel chose a leader and a note taker during this breakout session

## 11:00 a.m. Reporting Out

- **Intake to Petition**

- **Group Leader** - Gave a short list of what they feel is important to work on this year. They looked back at the four objectives that were in the CJ Annual Report as kind of a basis to start on. One of the big things that they would like to see and will need help with, from facilitators is possibly the development of a training clearing house. Emily had mentioned Missouri has a training clearing house that kind of encapsulates all child welfare training in one place that people can access quickly to identify any necessary training and is maintained throughout the years.
- Another thing they looked at is possibly having Ann report on the specific kind of action items that the agency is undertaking to address each of those four main objectives. So, specific action steps and if she could report out on that or find somebody that can report out on that at these quarterly meetings.
- A third one would be getting all of the grantees to come and give an update on what's going on with their organizations at these quarterly meetings. They know that Anne Goodall receives these updates so maybe it's just a matter of passing that information to them.
- Also, Dr Killough had mentioned that DCF has a pilot project going on in Wyandotte and another county in Kansas, and it's a medical evaluation project. She doesn't know much about that, but she is going to report back on that project and how that's going.

- **Custody to Transition**

- **Group Leader** – They looked at the survey data and saw a common theme across the top four responses.
  - Those were tied to delays in permanency, too many kids in care, lack of resources, particularly around our older youth, high caseloads and overall turnover.
  - **As they dove deeper, they wanted to put a focus on turnover and knowing that that could really have a pretty significant impact across a lot of the areas that we saw.**
- They would like to work to create a package that respects the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of child welfare staff in order to promote the retention and effectiveness of the staff. They felt that this includes higher quality benefits, stronger pre-education. Pre-education, meaning those young adults coming to us out of college.
  - A lot of work we do is entry level, straight out of college, professionals, and so it's that Pre-education, that degree field and ongoing professional development.
- They talked about needing a way to incentivize State College social welfare programs to value and emphasize, child welfare, better improve agency's self-care recognition and mentoring programs, and then to grow child welfare programs.

- Some of the action steps they came up with was to:

- Secure data to confirm the survey results.
- Identify other resources to help collect that data.
- They felt that that will help drive additional steps such as:
  - Research on salary and other states that have influenced their child welfare turnover.
  - Sharing Kansas child Welfare aggregate data on exit interviews and turnover
  - Gather salary scales, wage aggregate or salary scales in Kansas and other states with privatized child welfare, that have lower turnover.
  - Do a survey to identify what companies have in regard to tuition assistance programs, paying for social work licensure, and that would not just be for social work but also for other professions that are BS or licensed partners such as therapists with license renewals and CEU's
  - Work with State Universities to build Child Welfare prioritized social work. Making those connections with the social work programs and develop partnership with existing contractors to connect with students.
  - Create and build DEI framework for child welfare organizations to implement

#### **11:15 a.m. CJA Updates –& CJA Sub-Grantee Committee – Anne Goodall**

- Anne wanted to make sure that both groups got some good information about our new CJA grants that were awarded this summer. The Children's Justice Act allows Kansas about \$186,000 a year to award grantees and programs that support investigation, prosecution of child abuse and neglect, specific to children with disabilities, sexual abuse, and multidisciplinary teams. Anne stated that we had five grantees for the last three years, those expired June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- An RFP went out in February, asking for new grant submissions, and a few examples of how they wanted to see some different programs in Kansas were given, not necessarily that they had to do those programs, but they wanted to see something different, so there are four grantees this round. They are three-year grants. They do not have to complete the full three years and will have to request renewal every year. Anne also stated that they will be looking more strongly at outcomes, to see that the grantees are doing what they say they're going to do.
- Three of the grants are the same that have been awarded before.
  - **KCSL** - Primarily covers governor's conference costs for speakers that fall under those CJA guidelines speakers and trainers.
  - **Children's Advocacy centers of Kansas** - They are going to focus this year on a four-part eco series, that stands for extension for community health outcomes, and includes customized medical based trainings that will cover topics related to child physical abuse and forms of medical neglect. The series will focus on the identification of medical aspects of these complex cases, inclusion of medical evidence in an investigation and use of medical evidence in the judicial process. In addition, they will continue to do their prosecution training and support of MDTs and training of CAC staff across the state.
  - **Child first of Kansas** - They are going to continue with their child first forensic



interview trainings twice a year, and then they do one advanced training around June or July. In addition, they also requested some additional funds for scholarships for smaller communities, law enforcement, medical, and judicial personnel to attend child first and their advanced trainings.

- **Safe Care of Kansas** - The fourth grant is a new program and is considered a pilot project in Johnson and Wyandotte counties. Children's Mercy already has this program in Missouri, where if there are reports of injury, or possible injury of a child in an investigation that each investigator will send information to Children's Mercy, that will be reviewed by a child abuse pediatrician who will then determine if that child needs to be seen face to face and have an exam.

## **12:00 p.m. Diversity, Equity & Inclusivity (DEI) Presentation**

### **Diversity, Equity & Inclusivity (DEI) Presentation—DCF – Shanelle Dupree and Brandi Turner – presenting**

- Brandi discussed being more intentional around DEI efforts and building a character more intentional around DEI efforts. She goes on to say that anyone can lead from where they are and that they are taking that by the horns and really trying to figure out how we want to represent ourselves as an agency and how we can best serve our clients. Brandi discusses that our main focus right now is on building equity by learning to recognize where and how it is needed so we can show up and be our most effective selves.
- Shanelle – reported that thinking through our history, because I think it's so important to remember our history, if we don't think about our history, if we don't talk about our history, then we forget how it happened, and then we don't understand why families have the reaction that they have towards us who are operating within a system because stories are passed down from generation to generation, and experiences matter and some experiences have long lasting long reaching effects.
- So, we have the history, and we must tell the history, and talk about racial disparities, and how it has impacted black and brown families. It's been harmful to communities and to sectors of people. And so, the truth is when we begin to address the issues that have plagued the traditional marginalized folks right when you address issues that have traditionally affected black and brown families, then you'll automatically begin to help, and lift up other families.
- Brandi will be sharing trainings with everyone that is coming up to help with training on how we can help make things better in this area of the work we do.
- **1:00 p.m. Children's Alliance—Kinship Caregiver Training Overview**
  - Shanna and the children's Alliance wanted to share the resource, Kinship with everyone.
  - They started having some conversations about the needs of our kinship providers as they really launched into the efforts to become a kin first state. There are not a lot of resources for kinship caregivers because the Alliance owns

the right to MAPP, the only one approved Foster Care Licensing curriculum in the state, it made sense that they created something that was MAPP compatible. And so, the kinship curriculum will do just that. They found there is not a lot of high cross training for kinship families. The data shows that outcomes are clearly better for kids whenever they are placed with relatives or at least someone who they have a relationship with. This will be a path to licensure should a kinship family want to do that. It will still have to be approved by DCF, after the curriculum is completely done. TIPS MAPP and Deciding Together are the ones that are approved for our traditional foster families. But if you think about that curriculum, and you know them very well, they are designed for foster families, they are not really designed for the unique needs of kinship caregivers. Kinship Origins takes all of that into account. If they can get this curriculum approved under the MAPP family of programs, then they can make sure those Kinship caregivers receive the same amount of stipend. They want all of the Child Welfare workforce to understand this curriculum, the purpose behind it, and the benefits of the curriculum.

- Origins is a 4-hour pre service that would be available right away.
- Path is the licensing curriculum and is about 24 hours.
- Home is 45 minutes to an hour-long module's on specific needs designed for all caregivers.
- Piloted facilitator sessions have begun.
- Kyle showed a presentation on the Kinship training they have been working on. It is very interactive and helps the Kinship families to have more information and training than what they have currently. Kyle offered anyone that was interested into working through the training to help them with improvements or suggestions was welcome to do so.

## **2:00 p.m. Meeting Adjourns**

### **Meeting adjourned.**

Next meeting date & location—TBD

**November 12, 2021**

### **Meeting Minutes**

## **10:00 a.m. Panel Meeting Begins**

**Panel Attendance:** Jenn Hansen, Dena Russell Marino, Linda Street, Sharilyn Ray, Kelly Durkin, Ann Goodall, Brandy Tofel, Justine Burton, Randi Halonen, Malissa Martin

**Panel Support:** Taylor Forrest, Hettie Wilson

### **10:00 a.m. Panel Meeting Begins**

- Welcome & Introductions
  - Taylor introduced Hettie Wilson as the new CRP Coordinator
  - Hettie gave a brief introduction to the panel about herself.
- Brief announcements/invitations
  - Custody to Transition Chair – Taylor explained that a Panel Chairperson was still needed and that it was still unclear exactly what that position entails, but that she and Hettie would be happy to help define that. Sharilyn Ray posted in the chat that she would like to be considered. Taylor responded that we would be reaching out to discuss with Sharilyn.
  - Meeting format moving forward – Taylor asked if everyone was okay with continuing virtual meetings for now. There was group consensus to move forward with virtual, and pursue in-person for the Joint Retreat next Summer.
  - 2022 Meeting Dates – Taylor asked everyone if they had received the 2022 meeting dates, and everyone responded that they had received them and were fine with them.

### **10:15 a.m. Panel Member Updates**

- General updates from members on service delivery, challenges, and resources
  - Sharilyn Ray updated about the continued need for conversations about race, disparities.
  - Ann Goodall announced that Child Advocacy Centers of Kansas is looking for a new Executive Director.
  - Brandy Tofel stated that turnover/lack overqualified candidates continues to be challenge for everyone
  - Randi Halonen introduced herself as being the Kinship Navigator Program Manger with KFAN. She is working with the Center for States, DCF, and other community partners on building an Evidence Based Kinship Program.
- DCF Update
  - Ann Goodall stated that they have had a lot of change in job titles and positions in DCF Administration, so she wanted to share the org chart in the chat so that everyone can save it for future reference. Taylor added that she will save it into the one drive for this panel as well.
  - Ann states that she is now primarily with the Prevention Unit and has moved under Pam Hahn. Pam may sometimes join the Intake to Petition panel, but Melinda Kline will remain on this one.
  - Ann shared that DCF started a Crisis Response for families. She added the Crisis Response sheet in the chat. Ann asked if anyone had heard of the Crisis Response, had any experience using it or have known any families who had used it. Ann explained that it is a statewide number and families can get over the phone or in person support, they can get in touch with emergency medical services, law enforcement or the crisis response unit can be connected for emergency situations.

- Linda street stated that she did not know any families who have used it but she knew a couple of case teams that have tried to used it when they have had children in their offices who are escalating and they needed a clinical resource to help and unfortunately they feedback that she has received is that they haven't had much luck.
- They are being told you have a mental health center in your area and to take them there. But the child is so escalated that they can't get them there and that is why they were calling the mobile crisis unit. Linda added that she has heard that a couple of times. Linda wondered if this is because they are focused more on families. Ann responded saying that she thinks they are. Ann added that she thinks it's because agencies have resources and knowledge whereas a lot of families don't. Linda stated that is not how they understood when it was rolled out to them. She understood it to be for all people involved in the foster care system or not involved in the foster care system that they were there as a resource for the children to help deescalate the children and give tools for that. Ann said that was good feedback for her to pass along. Sharilyn followed up by stating many of the children in the office are not stable and do not have the benefit of placement, which means they need this service even more.
- Ann told everyone that each DCF office now has cribettes in their offices and if anyone is in need of a cribbette or safe sleep instruction, they will be provided with one along with a safe sleep instructor. She noted that they can still receive the cribbete even if they do not want the sleep instruction.
- Ann said that when we have a child death in the state, part of her position is writing up the critical incident for the executive team to understand what happened and work with law enforcement, then follow up with the worker who had to work that child death and the family a few months later. She asks the worker if there was anything that the agency could have provided them in the field to help work with this family or helped with this situation. One of the workers has told her that if he had access to a Pack n' Play, he would have brought it to the door and he felt like that would have prevented this child's death.
- Ann gave an update on the settlement agreement. The settlement agreement that DCF has requires practice improvements to improve placement stability and make sure that children in state custody have access to mental health and behavioral health services. It also requires them to have specific measurable outcomes over a 3-to-4-year period. These outcomes include requirements about the average number of placement and moves, per 1000 days, percentage of youth who mental and behavioral health needs are met, are in a stable placement, with 1 or fewer placement moves per year, and get a timely mental health and trauma screen when they come into DCF custody.

- Ann adds that there is an independent advisory group called the Center for Study of Social Policy who is required to give recommendations as the state is implementing all these requirements of the settlement agreement and they are supposed to evaluate and report because they are a natural party. Judy Meltzer has been identified as the neutral party.
- In the last couple years, DCF has been able to safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home placement by approximately 1000 children. This reduction, along with increased percentage of children placed with relatives and kin, the launching of our care match system and increased community mental health services, has helped improve placements and increase placement stability leading to better outcomes for youth already.

#### **10:45 a.m. Strategic Goals Recap**

- Taylor said that she wanted to go over the strategic goals that the panel had previously discussed during the breakout session at the joint retreat since Herself nor Hettie were able to attend.
- Taylor shared her screen with the Strategic Objective handout that was sent to everyone, briefly went over each objective, and asked if the handout captured what their discussion in the breakout rooms was about. There were no objections and Taylor observed nodding yes.
- Taylor asked for more clarification on the action step for secure data to confirm survey results. Jenn Hansen replied that what she remembers is that they sort of had their own internal impressions, but that they wanted to get firsthand data from DCF or whoever to confirm what our impressions are.
- Taylor explained CRP Coordinators went ahead and put together a survey to be sent to Child Welfare contractors to gain insight onto staffing recruitment/retention.
  - Taylor shared the current survey results on her screen and let everyone know if she missed anything to let her know. Hettie told everyone that she was able to send it to St Francis, Cornerstones of care, TFI, and 2 of the CJA Subcontractors Kansas Children's Service League and the Children's Advocacy Center of Kansas. She added that she was not able to get the contact information for Eckerd Connects and KVC HR departments. Hettie was also not able to get ahold of 2 of the CJA subcontractors Child First of Kansas and Safe Care of Kansas. Hettie asked that if anyone had that contact information to please pass it along to her.
  - Taylor said we will continue to work on getting more organizations to fill out the survey.

#### **11:00 a.m. Staff Recruitment & Retention/Turnover**

- Kansas salaries & benefits – Taylor said that we will begin to reach out to other states and conduct research regarding salaries and staff retention and what they are doing different.
- Work groups discussion/signup – Taylor told everyone that she thought workgroups for the individual objectives would be beneficial and asked how everyone else felt about having workgroups to narrow in on the individual topics. Everyone was in agreement to have three workgroups. Taylor stated she envisioned that the workgroups will meet 1 or 2 additional where we would look at data or maybe they would do some of their own research and then each workgroup can come back and present to the group. Below are the workgroups identified:
  - Staff Recruitment & Retention
  - Universities
  - DEI
- Jenn added that she is happy to sit down to talk about these things, but doesn't feel like she can commit to having the time to sit down and coming up with the data on her own.
- Brandy asked about what the expectations of the meetings would be and that knowing a little more of what that would look like would help her.
- Taylor said that she was envisioned that if there were workgroups, they would meet to get conversations started, what their focus was, and how they would want to go about focusing in on those areas. They would probably meet in December or January before the next meeting in February. She added that it would be just an hour or hour and a half meeting. Taylor asked if everyone felt that was something they could do. Everyone stated yes and CRP coordinators indicated a signup for the workgroups would come soon.

#### **11:45 a.m. Other Topics**

- DCF Response to 2021 Annual Report Recommendations – Taylor said that they did receive the DCF response to the 2021 report. Taylor will send the response via email to everyone on the panel. Taylor told everyone they can review it and if they have any questions or concerns, they can reach out to her.
- Speakers for next meeting – Taylor asked if anyone had anyone else that they would like to hear from She added that she plans on bring in Children's Alliance next time to give a legislative update.
  - Jenn Hansen asked Taylor if she received the information on some guest speakers regarding the Kansas strong program. Jenn stated that she will resend the information to Taylor.
  - Taylor said once the division of the child advocate is up and running, she thinks we should have that individual come speak as well. There was agreement on that as well.

## 12:00 p.m. Meeting adjourns

Next Meeting —February 4, 2022

**Kansas Citizen Review Panel: Custody to Transition**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 4, 2022**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83991713900?pwd=R2MrNmNCQnl4K1hSejd6VnBEYXJ2QT09>

**Meeting ID:** 839 9171 3900

**Passcode:** 589291

Attending: Taylor Forrest, Libby Hayden, Linda Long, Ann Goodall, Lana Goetz, Sharilyn Ray, Kerrie Lonard, Tara Wallace, Sara Hortenstine, Danielle Bartelli, Brook Town, Linda Street, Brandy Tofel, Malissa Martin, Melinda Kline, Candace Johnson, Nina Shaw- Woody, Emily Killough, Sandra Shopteese, Shanna Jager

### 10:00 a.m. Panel Meeting Begins

- Welcome & Introductions
- Brief announcements/invitations
  - Custody to Transition Chair Vote
    - Sharilyn Ray expressed interest, Taylor has talked with her about the role and is putting it up for vote at this time: Nina Shaw Woody motioned, Brandy Tofel seconded, motion passed.
    - Sharilyn Ray is now the chairperson for the Custody to Transition Panel.

### 10:10 a.m. Panel Member Updates

- **General updates from members on service delivery, challenges, and resources**
  - **Melissa Martin** – Announced they received gift from McKinsey Scott for \$4 million dollars. We had no idea it was coming. They did this like amazing, apparently deep dive into years' worth of 990s and other public information and our outcomes and our website, etc.
  - **Linda Long** – I will share my school district. I'm from Haysville school district south of Wichita, and we opened in October, a school-based health clinic partnership with KU Med, so super excited to have that in our school district. It's been extremely successful. We are finding lots of families that haven't had access to KanCare or weren't already signed up to KanCare. And we're getting those kids seen and we take students regardless of their ability to pay whether they have KanCare or not. So, it's been a huge help in our school district.
  - **Nina Shaw Woody** – DCF, KFAN and the Center for States will be presenting in April at the Child Welfare League of America conference about our partnership and collaboration here

in Kansas, so we get to share that with the world. So, we're really excited about it is regarding the kinship navigator program.

### DCF updates

- **Ann Goodall** – First we would like to share the DCF Nov. & Dec. Prevention Newsletter, and specifically wanted to discuss page 5. Thought it was a good graphic and some good numbers. We've started so many different initiatives over the last few years, we wanted to look at when those programs started and what happened to the out of home numbers in correlation to those programs. It's not often we get a good snapshot and share with this group just to draw attention to that because Kansas Practice model and Family First Prevention Services are things that we've talked about in this group and kind of introduced and haven't really gotten into a deep dive into what it has meant for Kansas.
- **Brandy Tofel** – Have you guys talked or thought about when these numbers might stabilize at some point? Do you think it will bounce back up? I think nationwide there's a downward trend of removals and referrals and so just wondering if DCF expects where that will level out?
- **Melinda Kline** – I think that from a big picture point of view, we had very high numbers in Kansas for out of home care. If we compare our numbers to the national numbers, removals at one time in several of our areas were twice the national average.
  - COVID did cause some court delays and I feel like our permanencies have fallen behind a little bit so we're seeing a longer stay in care.
  - I personally think we must continue so that we are only removing children if there are safety concerns. If we compare ourselves to other states that are the same size as Kansas, we still have substantially more children in out of home care. So, I think we still have quite a way to go to like level off, right.
  - We are always hearing, "we need more foster homes, we need more foster homes," and we have had a decrease in the number of foster homes in the last few years. Some of that was due to some data cleanup. They were licensed but they've never really taken placements, or situations like that. So, we've had some cleanup, which has added to the reduction. But from 2019 to 2020, we now have 1,100 fewer children in out of home care.
  - And we have approx. 161 fewer foster homes. Some agencies have more foster homes than they did back then, and about half of them have fewer foster homes. But we're also really focused on non-stranger care or kin placement. If they are removed and placed in foster care, we want them to be able to stay with family or someone they know. And so, we've really been focused on that and getting closer towards having 50 percent of our kids placed with relatives or in kin placements instead of foster homes.
  - All of that to say, we've heard forever we need more foster homes. And I'm not saying we don't need more foster homes. We absolutely do and we probably always will. But at the same time, maybe we need to remove fewer children, because at



one time, Kansas was 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the number of foster homes we had per capita.

- We're currently sitting at 6,508 kids in out of home care. I think that this prevention newsletter shows the support models we've invested in that build up communities. We've also seen mental health services in schools increase this year.

**Lana Goetz** – Those numbers are amazing Linda. I did want to mention, we're having the honorable Leonard Edwards, who's nationally known for reasonable efforts and his research on that, and he is going to be presenting 100 minutes on reasonable efforts and relative placement on April 19 and April 20. I'm particularly excited about this one, we're going to talk about the impact of implicit bias across the board and how that impacts kids. To register for the April Best Practices Training click here - <https://www.kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Programs/Child-Welfare-Law-Training/Spring-Training-in-Child-Welfare-Law>.

- **Candace Johnson:** Curious about the numbers of out of home care in other areas. In Sedgewick County we have been inundated with referrals we are sitting at 316 for the first 6 months compared to about 250 last fiscal year. What are you seeing across the state and what efforts are being made to curb some of this?
- **Melinda Kline:** I did see that in Sedgewick County and it is not in-line with the rest of the state. Kansas Practice Model Piece is well indicated for that as well as prevention programs. It is a conversation we need to have in Wichita—why is this happening there? Do you think that the referrals are appropriate for out of home?
- **Candace Johnson:** It's a mix. There are some that are very appropriate for removal and some that could have been prevention services instead. Family Pres at capacity may be the part of reason.
- **Melinda Kline:** I will look at data and get you some comparisons. Senate Bill 367 comes up, feeling that impact and that law on our child welfare system. Racial breakdown for this fiscal year is at 17 to 18%.
- **Anne Goodall** also mentioned that there have been many large sibling groups in that area also.
- **Anne Goodall:** To finish my updates - our KPRC hotline just revised some call prompts in the last month or two to adjust the call flow. This went live in January. It gives an opportunity for someone calling the hotline to press the prompt, so they can hear how to connect families with supports. It'll connect them to 1-800-children and even get supporting parents texted to their phone or another phone number and maybe that will, you know, just prompt some preventive services instead of simply reporting abuse. We'll see how that affects the number of calls and reports.
  - There's also a couple of op eds that were published in December in January by some high ranking DCF officials. In December. Secretary Howard wrote an op ed for the

Kansas City Star and Tom Buell, Regional Director in Wichita wrote one for Wichita, is just copy and paste those links into the chat.

- Secretary Howard <https://www.kansascity.com/opinion/readers-opinion/guest-commentary/article256466166.html>
- Tom Buell <https://www.ctnewsonline.com/opinion/article>
- So, this this could be a very good preventive service for families or something you all can share with your community, but the SNAP program is offering free online classes from November 21 to September of 22. Snap Education - [www.k-state.edu/ks-snaped/](http://www.k-state.edu/ks-snaped/) or you can refer individuals to the program's brand-new toll-free number for more information: 1-855-476-2733. (855-4SNAPED)
- Starting Jan 25 for every community, there is now virtual office hours every Wed. 11 – 1. Anyone can sign up for appointments and get DCF that can answer questions via TEAMS.

### 10:30 a.m. Workgroups Report Out

- **Staff Recruitment & Retention – Danielle Bartelli**

- **Danielle Bartelli:** This workgroup met and spoke about Staff Recruitment and retention. I think it's an ongoing discussion that we've had for years. How do we keep people? How do we bring people into this field and keep people in this field? How do we work through that and keep our staff healthy, safe, and supported? This seems to be a struggle for everyone.
  - We talked about those smaller perks, but in our conversation, it really came down to big picture. What are things that would really benefit all child welfare workers, including staff that work at PRTFs.
  - We talked about salary and compensation for this work. We discussed trying to find some sort of minimum salary range that statewide Kansas could agree on. We know that it's a competitive field that we're in and we know that when we submit bids, salary is up to every grantee. And so, you could put a salary very high for your staff, but you also could lose a bid because your budget would be out of line with what other people put. So, if there could be some created minimum salary identifying this is what we expect people in this field to make, but you WOULD go above this if you wanted to. But this is the minimum that we feel like people should receive when they do this type of work.
  - We talked about how Texas has done something similar for their DCF equivalent staff, and it went over well for them.

- **Universities Partnership – Tara James Wallace**

- **Tara James Wallace:** The social work programs give you a basic knowledge of social work and the child welfare experience and that's it, and then they move on to other areas. And from that experience, a lot of individuals are not prepared for the world of child welfare. They will leave with a bachelor's degree and go into child welfare not fully prepared for that experience, which will often lead to burnout. It leads to individuals feeling confused and frustrated with the school that they attended and their whole experience of social work profession.

- There's a negative image of the child welfare system, which is partially due to how its presented in school. It's something that just popped into my head regarding the staff recruitment and retention.
- In our workgroup meeting, someone also mentioned that as a student if you talk about wanting to go into child welfare, professors will often try to deter you from doing that.
- We are going to do some research and start a spreadsheet of colleges and universities with social work programs, human and social service programs.
- Our workgroup is also going to check and ee what partnerships DCF has going with universities and possibly invite individuals to come and speak to the panel.
- We also discussed putting together a flyer to see if any of those partners would be interested in going to the universities to speak to students so that students have a real realistic understanding.
- **Taylor Forrest:** We just met with DCF to learn about the current partnerships they already have and we are continuing to do some digging and research in that area.
- **DEI – Tara James Wallace – Sharilyn Ray**
  - **Sharilyn Ray:** The DEI workgroup invited DCF DEI Officer, Brandi Turner to speak to the workgroup. She gave information around Kansas Racial Equity and just the disparities that exist in child welfare.
    - Some other things that we talked about was allowing the families to be the expert in their lives. It's a little bit hard for somebody that's not in that situation to tell them where they need to go if they've never experienced it.
    - Something that came up that the group felt like was important was sitting down with the family and allowing the family to tell you what supports they have outside of child welfare. Building up those natural supports to help the family.
    - We talked about the saying of the system being broken when it's not broken. It's doing what it was set up to do. And we kind of need to have a reboot of our thinking how we're approaching things and solutions and start over fresh so that we can impact families in a positive way.
    - We discussed whether there are DEI trainings that exist for frontline workers or trainings around racial equity and disproportionality that exists. It was a group consensus that there really isn't one and the majority of training around this topic is typically created by people that aren't impacted by the disproportionality. Just allowing that representation of the people that are being impacted by the system to be a part of creating a solution for reduction of the disproportionality.
    - It was also stated that at DCF there's changes every four due to politics. Something that can be put in place can be changed up the next assignment of whoever's in office.
      - We discussed that we have 6% of Kansans are African American, however, 17% of the children that are removed and placed in foster care are African American.
      - At one time DCF wase doing a Risk of Removal staffing, that were blind staffings, and that was proof that show to prove that it reduced the

disproportionality and gave more fair unbiased recommendations from the professionals involved.

- We also discussed that we are always promoting the need for more black foster homes. 11% of our foster homes in the state are African American. Only 6% of Kansans are African American, so our black foster homes are already having to work twice as hard. So, saying that we need to increase would require that they increase the workload. Instead we need to look at the root of the problem of why we're seeing such a high number of children of color and coming into care.
  - We also discuss that maybe we could get some research and figure out what's working in other places because it is a nationwide problem. We need representation for people of color in DCF in other areas that are making decisions, because it's hard for someone to be advocated for when they're not represented fully.
- **Taylor Forrest:** If anyone would like to attend the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative learning sessions may do so. Below is a link. The next learning session is on Feb. 23.  
<https://www.careportal.org/kansas-racial-equity/>

#### **11:00 a.m. Discuss Annual Report Recommendations**

- **Taylor Forrest:** We outlined how we will be approaching the Annual Report Recommendations.
  - The Workgroups will be meeting again in March. During these next workgroup meetings, each work group will discuss one or two action steps or recommendations to present to the entire panel in April
  - The entire panel reconvenes in April. During this meeting we will spend a significant amount of time discussing these recommendations for the annual report.
  - The panel was in agreement with this approach.

#### **11:15 a.m. Division of the Child Advocate – Kerrie Lonard, Kansas Child Advocate**

- **Kerrie:** As many of you know, I was a part of the CRP Intake to Petition panel for several years. I appreciate having the opportunity now to participate with the Custody to Transition panel in this new role.
- The Division of the Child Advocate was established by the Governor in October by Executive order 21- 28.
  - Immediately prior to that executive order, our Governor had issued another executive order which is 21- 27, which establishes the Office of Public advocate's. The vision for Kansas is to really have an office of public advocates that is independent in order to fulfill their role. Within the Office of Public Advocate's, we will have the Long-term Care Ombudsman, the KanCare Ombudsman, and then the Division of the Child Advocate at this time.
  - Temporary office location, the exciting news is that we will be moving over to Landon next week. We are working on establishing a website and a toll-free number.
  - Brook Town, who actually is joining us today, is one of three case analyst positions that I have within the division. I want to pass along that I want this to be an open dialogue as this division is grown and created and I want feedback to make sure that we are fulfilling

the mission, that the division is relevant, that we stay focused on strengthening our systems and meeting our the needs of children and families.

- Please access PowerPoint for further information about this presentation.

**11:45 a.m. Legislative Update – Shanna Jager, Children’s Alliance, Executive Director of Public Policy**

- I think we're wrapping up week four of legislative session, which means we're like at least a quarter of the way done.
  - I think if I start by saying there's been a lot of informational briefings around child welfare related topics so far at the statehouse, and I think they've been well received. They've been receptive when DCF and other partners have testified on some of the changes that have been made and the progress and the successes that we're seeing. And of course, we continue to lift the things that we still need to work on and that we still need appropriations for.
- SPARK Funding—I would be remiss if I didn't mention it, it's probably something this panel could even be talking about. How do you collectively work towards some of that? We've been working with the Office of Recovery on behalf of the Children's Alliance to talk about how do we, as child welfare providers, bring some of the most key issues that we're experiencing as a result of the pandemic. Applications for SPARK funding are due Feb. 16.
- Senate Judiciary is looking at House Bill 2075, allowing venue for adoption. Basically, what that did was allow adoptions to take place in an office where DCF has an office or one of their providers has an office instead of it happening in their home base in Topeka or Shawnee County or wherever. So that is a positive change for the adoption process.
- HB 2200 had some attention two weeks ago. That bill basically proposes that we use evidence-based program funds that came out of Senate Bill 367, which is juvenile justice reform, that we are able maybe to explore how we use those funds slightly different.
  - While there were opponents to that bill, I think they're really opposing any changes to SB 367. Children’s Alliance did stand in favor of that bill because we are interested in looking at how we can use those evidence-based funds for prevention work. Which the way it's written in 367, we cannot use it for those already in the juvenile justice system.
- HB 2362 modifying the elements and making changes to the criminal penalties abuse of a child. There was a hearing held last week.
- In Health and Human Services, Chair Landwehr entertained a hearing on House Bill 2463 which would stop any changes to the MCO contracts. So, they are pursuing opening those RFPs up, like KanCare 3.0 conversations basically.
- There'll be a hearing on directing DCF to share certain information around an investigation with law enforcement. So, if you watched the joint committee very carefully in the fall, that was a recommendation that came out of that joint committee.
  - Ed Klump advocated on behalf of law enforcement saying there are times when DCF is secret about their information. The joint committee really instructed DCF and Ed and his constituents of law enforcement to kind of come to an agreement. So, this bill has been entered in both chambers.
  - Budget discussions are starting to heat up.
  - Another conversation in both Senate Judiciary and House judiciary, and I think

they're even having the same discussion in House Corrections, is this notion around criminal restraints in court for youth. And we did also provide written testimony on that bill. Knowing that there are certainly cases and the bill allows the court to make the decision if there are certain cases when a child would be you know, maybe they're the runner or maybe there's certain circumstances when they do need to be restrained, but in general, it's probably not necessary for youth to come into court shackled.

- Okay, I think let's see next week there is a hearing on rights of sexual assault victims and I think we're going to enter neutral testimony from the Children's Alliance perspective, because while I think the bill has good intentions, it doesn't address minors in the right way. So, they need to take another look at how that impacts I think minors.
- **Lana Goetz:** We have an opening on the Supreme Court Task Force for permanency planning as a parent representative. This could be anyone as defined in CINC in the seat as a parent (biological parent, foster parents, adoptive parent, guardian or conservative, all the qualifications are that you've had experience in the child welfare system).
  - We have opened applications for that process, and I can send you all the information on it. We are accepting applications until Feb. 28. 4-year term.
  - They will have a voting seat on the Supreme Courts Task Force and permanency planning for all projects relating to child welfare under the Supreme Court.

#### **12:00 p.m. Meeting adjourns**

Workgroups will reconvene in March

Next Entire Panel Meeting — April 1

**Kansas Citizen Review Panel: Custody to Transition  
Meeting Minutes  
April 1, 2022  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89120791613?pwd=ZTdmcR1hwKzUzUVVDSngxOGdsNytnQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 891 2079 1613  
**Passcode:** 450336

Participants: Isabella Hellon, Taylor Forrest, Amanda Galloway, Candace Johnson, Carol Roberts, Kelly Durkin, Malissa Martin, Sara Hortenstine, Sharilyn Ray, Tara Wallace, Linda Street, Kerrie Lonard, Frances Breyne, Brandy Tofel, Emily Kilough, Dena Marino, Justine Burton

#### **10:00 a.m. Panel Meeting Begins**

- Brief announcements/invitations
  - Taylor Forrest: CRP National Conference in person. It will be in Monterey, CA, May 23 - 25.
  - Taylor will be verifying how many panel members can attend.
  - If you are interested in attending, email Taylor and she will make note of it.
- Anne and Melinda were not able to be here today, so no DCF updates.
- Malissa Martin said that anyone who is interested in the government relations realm or non-profit communications please visit the CIS MidAmerica Website because there are some open positions.
- Sara Hortenstine also shared a job offer at the State Child Death Review Board that entails working with Sara to do data analysis, annual reports, and finding new ways to improve the child welfare system.

#### **10:10 a.m. Panel Member Updates**

- General updates from members on service delivery, challenges, and resources
  - **Malissa Martin** said that anyone who is interested in the government relations realm or non-profit communications please visit the CIS MidAmerica Website because there are some open positions.
  - **Sara Hortenstine** also shared a job offer at the State Child Death Review Board that entails working with Sara to do data analysis, annual reports, and finding new ways to improve the child welfare system.
- DCF updates
  - Anne & Melinda were not able to attend, so no DCF updates

#### **10:20 a.m. Beacon Mobile Crisis Presentation – Frances Breyne, Executive Director, Kansas**

- Please see attached PowerPoint.

#### **10:40 a.m. Workgroups Report Out**

- Staff Recruitment & Retention – *Sharilyn Ray*
  - Discussed secondary trauma being a huge issue that needs to be addressed.
  - Creating a supportive work environment is just as important as the salary itself.
  - We also discussed that a lot of the VP's and upper management are older, so in the next so many years, we will be replacing them with a lot younger staff. It should be part of the interview process to know WHAT the newer people need and want within a job.
  - We cannot have an expectation for recently graduated students to be working 80 hours a week right away.
  - Caseload numbers may be trending down, but the complexity of the cases for case workers are not, which is not going to alleviate any of the stress within the position.
  - We discussed building in dollars to help maintain staff's mental health and help with retention.
  - Need for more adequate salaries for the work being done.
  - Need for immediate support for staff when in crisis.
  - We always discuss exit interviews, so make sure that we also have meetings with those staff who STAY, and why they stay.
- Universities Partnership – *Tara James Wallace*

- Tara Wallace said they looked at a child welfare certification program, this program has a stipend for practicum (8 dollars an hour for up to 140 hours)
  - Since DCF has started offering the stipend, more and more students have loved their practicum experience and take the certification program.
  - The problem of staff turnover happens when students enter the actual field due to low pay and tough hours.
  - There is a good chance of partnering with KU, but not so much with the other schools. Could we make any recommendations for partnering with other schools?
  - The stipend is only available to students who complete their practicum at DCF.
  - There is the state level student loan forgiveness program, yet there are a lot of hurdles, and the application is confusing for a reason.
  - Discussion of better work environments and better pay - something that overlaps for all of the groups
- **DEI – Sharilyn Ray**
    - We discussed that there was top-down DEI work done at KCSL (which showed great success), also when you start at the top and work down it will filter downward instead of just targeting the frontline workers.
    - DEI has been a topic focus at the legislature and audit meetings, so it is on people’s minds.
    - We discussed implementing blind removal staffing’s to help with disproportionality.
    - The resounding thing was just that we need to strongly recommend taking action to realize the disparities that exist in child welfare. We need to see actual change that is happening, and not just talk about it.

**11:00 a.m. Review CAPTA**

- Taylor sent this via email to remind everyone what the purpose and charge of the panel is in regards to CAPTA.

**11:10 a.m. Outline Annual Report Recommendations**

- **Taylor** had everyone review the workgroup recommendations, and then opened for the floor for discussion.
- **Candace:** I like what the sub-groups put together; they did an amazing job. I would like to see within the staff and retention recommendation that the increasing salaries bullet is not only regarding the state and employee level, but across contracts also to make it nice and clear.
  - On the university partnership committee, a big thing is that having the state advocating for the partnership between the university and various contracts throughout the state so that we are one agency and partnership under the big umbrella of DCF.
- **Tara Wallace:** I think the Crisis Team for frontline workers should be reworded. Implement Mentoring Support Teams for frontline workers to prevent stress, etc.
- **Sharilyn Ray:** I am afraid they will take Mentoring as work training. I agree with changing wording though. Not sure if something like Immediate Support Team? I’m just thinking of how much we hear mentoring, and it is used differently. Just want a solid clarification.



- **Tara Wallace:** I chose mentoring as a less reactive word than crisis. It can be in any form. A phone call, email. Cup of coffee. Something to let the person know that someone is checking in on them. My social work mentors are in Texas so getting together in person is nearly impossible. But we text, call, email, etc.
- **Candace Johnson:** We can set a minimum for caseloads, yet with turnover and retention it is impossible to stay there and also get everything done.
- **Dena Marino:** DCF used to have a program where they would hire you, and while you were working and going to school for your degree, they would give you a partial salary and pay for your school as well. She felt like without these benefits, she would not have stayed with DCF for the long haul. There were many social workers who took these benefits and then stayed with the agency for a long time.
- **Emily Killough:** Went to a presentation on the power of peer support groups yesterday, presented by a social worker. Instead of mentoring, creating a program for peer support would be very effective. Peer support programs could be extremely helpful, and you could have trained peer supporters. The presenter's information: Tania Glenn- Trauma Defense Team for first responders. <https://www.taniaglenn.com/>
- **Dena Marino:** Since we're talking about retention, does pay increase for individuals who have stayed with the organization for long? Is there a big increase after one year, two years, etc.?
- **Candace Johnson:** DCF used to have pay increases regularly before funding was cut. Typically, it has been more of a cost-of-living adjustment bump, annually, as budget has allowed. Trying to reward longevity is important, yet we now have a workforce that has zero experience for the most part so when they start becoming overwhelmed, they may leave despite loving their job.
- **Dena Marino:** Does everyone agree with recommending an implementation of step increases?
- **Brandy Tofel:** Schools and hospitals seem more appealing for recruiting, so we need to set our salaries like those.
- **Dena Marino:** Brought up shift work and asked if everyone would be comfortable recommending this idea to DCF. Shift work could be better for families and individuals. She also asked Candace what she thinks about the idea, as she works at SFM.
- **Candace:** They didn't necessarily do shift work at DCF, at Saint Frances they do not technically do it either, but encourage flexibility. Workers are more open to knowing exactly when they are off work.
- **Linda Street:** Pay would have to be increased for some of the shifts, and some people do not want to do that in the beginning, which is why incentives would be beneficial.
- **Brandy Tofel:** TFI is adding permanency crisis workers to help with the on-call and pick up the pieces – it can be hard with caseloads to do shift work – in theory it's a good idea, but how do you make the logistics work?
- **Emily Killough:** For the medical side of shift working, it is an extremely helpful and appealing idea. When we can't get a safety plan, we just have a kid who is potentially really injured who has to hang out at the hospital until we reach someone at DCF on Monday. This happens pretty much every week, in the evenings we admit children to the hospital daily, so they have a safe place to stay before reaching DCF. It would be significantly better to have someone who could answer calls at DCF after 4 pm, it is a huge barrier for them.
- **Sara Hortenstine:** We have recommended shift work through this panel in the past. Additionally, we discussed longevity bonuses last year. Do those still exist?
- **Candace:** The longevity bonus at DCF was terminated.

- **Brandy Tofel:** TFI does have a longevity bonus, which is only 100 dollars every year. (Capped at \$1,000 at 10 years)
- **Tara Wallace:** It makes no sense, but within private practice these actions are prohibited (longevity bonus potentials).
- **Taylor:** Is there a consensus on the peer support group and how it could look?
- **Tara Wallace:** We need to implement this program BEFORE the staff is in crisis.
- **Emily Killough:** There must be therapy services, support, etc. We need funding at a minimum for that type of support, it is extremely important, and we face so many traumatic experiences. Funding for mental health and peer support groups is a great option, but let's keep it broad because there are also so many other programs that could be implemented as well. So just a recommendation for support of mental health services for staff.
- **Taylor:** Is there consensus on shift work?
- **Dena Marino:** I would like to see some thought and action for shift work, so we can see if it works.
  - There was some disagreement about shift work, but making recommendation around flexibility.
  
- **Brandy Tofel:** We need to prioritize flexibility and recommend exploring new options around flexibility. It may have been successful in other states and should be looked at further.
- There was overwhelming support to recommend implementing a statewide process of blind removal staffing's.
- **Emily Killough:** I think compared to retention and DEI, the University recommendations do not seem clear or specific enough. I believe advocacy for social workers is the same as increasing pay and benefits, as recommended in the staff and retention workgroup.
- **Taylor:** If we want to continue to strengthen advocacy for social workers, it might be better to focus on just two sub-committees instead of all 3? Maybe wait and explore more options for the University sub-committee recommendations.
- **Tara Wallace:** If we want to put teeth to our recommendation around DEI, we need to recommend a top-down approach to DEI.
  
- **Emily Killough:** I think we need DEI to be our number one priority. Do we have to have more than 2 categories?
- **Taylor:** We just have to have a minimum of one.
- **Emily Killough:** How can we word a recommendation to have DEI programs implemented in leadership first for a top-down process?
- **Dena Marino:** Are we thinking that the training would be a one-time thing? Or ongoing?
- **Taylor:** I would think it needs to be reoccurring as leadership changes and things of that nature. Should we phrase the recommendation as using an external consultant or an expert in the field to help in DEI implementations?
- **Tara Wallace:** I think we should just recommend that an evaluation is conducted, and let the evaluation point to the training aspect. Any consultant worker will recommend someone external to do the training.
- **Emily Killough:** So our number one top priority is having a consultant conduct an evaluation and all the other DEI recommendations can trickle down from there.
  
- **Recommendations For Annual Report:**
  - **DEI**

- Recommendation #1 – Invest time and resources to partner with an outside consultant to conduct an in-depth evaluation of DCF policies, procedures, programming and data in regard to DEI, disproportionality, implicit bias and institutional racism.
- Recommendation #2 – Implement a state-wide blind removal staffing process to reduce unnecessary, disproportionate removal of Black children from their homes, decreasing harm and trauma to the family unit.
- **Staff Recruitment & Retention**
  - Staff Salaries, Benefit Packages, Flexibility
    - Increasing salaries, for state and contract employees, working on the front lines. This could look like implementing a base salary in contracts, etc.
    - Implement longevity bonuses and other milestone bonuses to attract staff to stay in this field.
    - Create more comprehensive benefit packages that generational staff entering workforce would like (more PTO, maternity/paternity leave, flexibility, etc.)
  - Supportive Staff Environment
    - Increase funding for mental health services for staff.
    - Implement a peer support group to help staff deal with secondary trauma.

**12:00 p.m. Meeting adjourns**  
Next Panel Meeting — June 3