

The mission of MCWAP is to assure that the state system is meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families through assessment, research, case reviews, advocacy, and greater citizen involvement. Our goal is to promote child safety and quality services for children, youth, and families.

Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel Minutes

June 5, 2020 / 9am-11am

Zoom Meeting

Co-Chair: Bobbi Johnson

Co-Chair: Deb Dunlap

Panel Coordinator: Heidi Landry- Interim

Present: Penthea Burns, Jim Jacobs, Cindy Seekins, Kelly Dell Aquila, Travis Bryant, Tammy Roy, Brittany Raven, Julia Simmons, Alana Jones, Betsy Boardman, Erin Witham, Adrienne Carmack, Deb McSweeney, Gina Googins, Lyn Carter, Annette Macaluso, Ahmen Cabral, Esther Anne, Chris Bicknell, Bobbi Johnson, Todd Landry, Marie Briggs, Jamie Brooks

Meeting minutes: Unanimous vote to approve May meeting minutes.

Updates: Panel thanked Todd for continuing to implement systems improvements while navigating the challenges of Covid-19. Executive Committee reviewed the Panel calendar and full Panel break in July and August, and noted the potential need for members to convene in workgroups over the summer in order to bring recommendations for review to the retreat in September.

Breakout Groups: Panel members continued discussing priority areas, Family Quality Engagement and Developmental/Behavioral Health, in breakout sessions.

Annual Report updates: Executive Committee thanked Panel members for their contributions to the completed report. Bobbi has sent the report to the Legislative HHS Committee; Deb will forward email to group.

OCFS Updates:

- Bobbi reviewed updates from weekly reports that provide data across DHHS services <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/data-reports/covid-19-impacts-on-dhhs-services>
- OCFS child protective hotline calls are down, similar to decline when school is not in session; school personnel typically account for 20-25% of calls.
 - Week of March 8, 32% of reports were from schools
 - Week of March 22, 8% of reports were from schools; this rate has stayed between 2-8%
 - Percentage of reports from law enforcement are trending up, from 15% to 30%
- Children are currently entering state custody at lower rates that follow the national trend.
- However, in December 2017 there were 1,644 children in care; May 2020 there are 2,257 children in care.
- Childcare closures resulted in a 50% capacity loss during previous phase.
- New authorizations of child care subsidies for workers have benefitted 486 families with 741 children.

- Beginning Monday, 6/8, OCFS will be implementing a reopening plan.
 - All districts, including 1,2,3,6, will begin responding in person, except when pre-screening checklist indicates otherwise.
 - Monthly caseworker contacts will resume in person.
 - OCFS is ensuring accessibility of PPE- providing cloth face coverings for staff, parents, children, resource families.
 - Family visitation resuming in person- started coordinating last week, will continue to use combination of video and in-person, encouraging resource families to continue to provide support, continuing efforts to limit exposure (considering vulnerabilities, resources, transportation, PPE).
 - OCFS has issued guidance to resource parents re: helping children cope with changing circumstances, re-integrating them into in-person visits.
 - Some additional staff will be added to the small teams working in office spaces, keeping to a small scale and adding guidelines about use of PPE, physical distancing. Majority of workforce will continue to work remotely.
- OCFS will be sharing a message responding to the death of George Floyd, including resources about how to talk to kids about what is happening.

CDSIRP and Children's Justice Taskforce Updates:

- CDSIRP has not met the last couple of months, but issued an annual report; Bobbi will share with MCWAP.
- Children's Justice Taskforce has not met.

Website Updates: Betsy will connect with website developers and extend deadline. Workgroup (Brianna, Adrienne, Alana, Betsy, Bobbi, Tammy) will develop content over summer, with the goal of launching in September.

Legislative Updates: Legislative Health and Human Services Committee will be convening requests yet. Convening will be virtual; can sign up to participate online.

Covid-19 Updates: Todd and Adrienne provided updates. Maine continues to have a steady number of cases each day, measure to watch carefully is the percentage of positive results. Maine is currently under the national average of 5.1-5.2%. Less than 15 youth in care have tested positive, some of them were in congregate care out of state. There have been no hospitalizations of children in care. DHHS has been able to provide additional support to resource parents for increased cost of care. Latest numbers on childcare centers: less than 25% are closed, compared to 50% in April. Essential worker childcare subsidies continue through the end of June. MAEYC and ME Roads to Quality are providing supplies to childcare providers, and an updated list of openings is available on <https://www.childcarechoices.me/index.php/home-page/> Also related to childcare, beginning in July, funds for infant care will be increased, in an effort to increase state capacity for care.

Next Steps:

Action	Lead
Forward Annual Report HHS Committee email to Panel	Deb
Develop website content over summer	Website Workgroup
Continue discussions over summer and submit Workgroup Report Form to Executive Committee by end of August	Breakout group leaders
(Carried over from April minutes) Invite Christine Theriault to future Panel meeting to review FFPSA and progress	Executive Committee

Next meeting: Full day Panel Retreat, September 11, 2020