

*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, 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**

**June 3, 2022 / 9 a.m.-11 a.m.**

**Virtual:** Meeting held over Zoom

**Co-Chairs:** Ahmen Cabral; Deb Dunlap

**Panel Coordinator:** Jenna Joeckel

### **Minutes**

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Virtual Attendance: Ahmen Cabral, Tammy Roy, Debra Dunlap, Erika Simonson, Andrea Mancuso, Jim Jacobs, Ariel Gannon, Kelsey McKinnon\*, Betsy Boardman, Kelly Dell'Aquila, Susan Denoncour, Senator Donna Bailey, Maura Keaveney, Annette Macaluso, Bobbi Johnson, Kris Pitts, Heidi Aakjer, Ashley McAllister, Todd Landry, Julian Richter, Travis Bryant, Esther Anne

Guest of the panel \*(AAG Intern)

#### **Standing Agenda Items**

May Minutes: A recommendation was made to include notes regarding the exchange between Attorney Richter and the Child Welfare Ombudsman. Decision to add the notes from this conversation to the minutes, resend to the panel for an electronic vote in June.

No Additional suggestions for edits

LD 1824 Vote Results: Kelly Dell'Aquila has accepted the nomination and will be representing the panel on this workgroup

Retreat Announcement Workgroup: Save the date for Friday September 16. Any panel members who are willing to volunteer to participate in the planning with executive committee members please reach out to the panel coordinator.

Resource Family Exit Survey: Results from surveys from Resource families from AFFM will be shared with the panel along with the minutes

#### **New Business**

Report Update: (Justice for Children's Task Force-Betsy Boardman)

Betsy Boardman from the Judicial Branch provided an overview and update from the Justice For Children's Task Force (JTF).

JTF is one of the three CRPs under CAPTA. The mission of the JTF is to improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children in the State of Maine Child Welfare System. The JTF is chaired by the Chief Justice and has representation from all three branches of government. The Charter of the JTF can be

found on the Citizen Review Panel Website located at this link: [Maine Child Welfare Citizen Review Panels | Maine \(mecitizenreviewpanels.com\)](http://Maine Child Welfare Citizen Review Panels | Maine (mecitizenreviewpanels.com))

A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is included in the minutes.

Questions/Discussion:

**How many parents have participated in the Parent Curriculum Program?** There have been 14 participants so far. The main barrier for this program has been parent participation. The court shares information flyers with all judicial notices and the judges have a prepared script to read to parents at their initial appearance in court, however, there still remains some reluctance for parents to participate.

The team was asked to consider coordination with MCILS to have parents attorneys share information about this program with their clients, as it may be better received. JTF has partnered with MCILS in sharing this information. Julian Richter offered to provide outreach to other parent attorneys to encourage client participation in this program.

The team discussed additional marketing of this curriculum. Esther Anne facilitated a small support group of women involved with the child welfare system. Those participants shared a request for a program for “know your rights”. The parent curriculum actually covers what this group was requesting, and the Opportunity Alliance (TOA) team members would be willing to provide an information session as it has been noted that participants who connect with TOA staff/Trainers prior to the program have a much higher level of participation.

The Opportunity Alliance noted that during the registration process for the first session, many of the registrants were providers. As a result, TOA developed a CPS 101 for providers earlier this spring and the registrations filled up immediately with 26 of the registrants participating. A second provider specific session is scheduled for June 30, 2022.

Funding for this program does conclude in September 2022.

**What are the Barriers to the State of Maine Participating in the National Association Council for Children Red Book Certification Training?** The JTF is not clear that there are barriers, however there are not Red Book certified individuals in the state. A member who represents parent attorneys shared that there is not currently a certification process in Maine. (After the meeting the member reached back out to the panel to share that the process to begin certifying practitioners in Maine has been initiated).

Annual Review of Outcomes: (Panel Goal Outcomes, OCFS Recommendations Outcomes)

**Panel Goal Outcomes:** Deb Dunlap and Ahmen Cabral shared an update on the review of panel goals and outcomes from 2016-2020. **The Power Point Presentation outlining panel goals/outcomes is attached with these minutes.**

**Additional discussion/Questions:**

Children’s Advocacy Centers (CAC) update: There are now CACs in every county in Maine. The CACs do collect data and Annette Macaluso can provide updates to the panel on a regular basis when the panel identifies what information they would like reported.

It was suggested that it may be helpful in future annual reports to organize the recommendations similar to how they are being reported out on at this meeting (recommendations for the panel, recommendations for OCFS, recommendations for others, etc).

**OCFS Recommendation Outcomes:** Bobbi Johnson, Associate Director of Child Welfare Services with the Office of Child and Family Services, provided an update on the Panel Recommendations to OCFS dating back to 2016. AD Johnson thanked the panel for the opportunity to highlight the ways in which OCFS is working to improve outcomes for children and families. It should be noted that some of the recommendations from the panel and activities of OCFS carry forward over multiple years.

**\*The PowerPoint Presentation outlining the recommendations to OCFS and progress made is attached with these minutes.**

#### **Questions/Discussion:**

**What were the obstacles to implement the pilot from the FTM recommendations?** The main barrier to implementing the recommendation involving neutral facilitators at all FTMS was funding and available resources. OCFS did initiate a similar model where there was an internal FTM Facilitator position located within each district office. Those staff facilitators worked with caseworkers and supervisors to facilitate FTMs in situations where they may have been the need for a petition to be filed or safety planning. A team member further shared that Family Group Conferencing could be an alternative model.

**Does the Family First Prevention Services ACT (FFPSA) have funding resources to implement the recommendation for a neutral facilitator for FTMs?** No. Families who would have child welfare involvement under the FFPSA do have FTMs. In the Fall of 2021, OCFS updated the FTM policy and practice expectations for staff. OCFS has also provided staff training on facilitation skills and conflict resolution.

**Policy Feedback from the Panel:** The Department shared being very receptive to the panel feedback and thanked members who have participated in offering comments. Panel members were encouraged to provide policy feedback in the future. Panel members requested that OCFS provide a longer time frame for panel members to review and provide meaningful feedback. Panel members also requested a red line of policies so that the panel could know what changes were made. AD Johnson will discuss these recommendations and requests with the policy development team.

**Policy Website:** Discussion that there is a new site where updated OCFS policies have been added. This new site is easy to access but does not have some of the policies that still remain on the older site. The older site is still active and appears to have more policies there. Julian Richter will send the links to both sites to Bobbi Johnson, and she will follow up.

**Workgroup Meetings:** Subcommittees broke out into workout groups and then rejoined the full Panel. During committee reports, groups were asked to share highlights about their current activities, list the Panel members who participated today, and identify the level of OCFS participation that is needed.

#### **1. Family-Centered policy and practice**

*Andrea, Senator Bailey, Erika, Julian, Kelly, Lanelle, Maura, Heidi, Susan*

Betsy explained to the group what the transformation zone project is. The workgroup will be doing pre-retreat work over the summer and discussed what they will be doing over the next 3

months. They will come to the retreat prepared to present ideas and recommendations for full panel consideration. The group also discussed trainings that have been on hold for logistic reasons and will explore if/when the third part of the 6-part series can occur.

### **Effective Communication/Coordination**

*Adrienne, Ahmen, Debra, Jim*

During the last meeting, the group received a presentation from Leigh-Anne Bordas on the Katahdin project. This group reviewed that information and discussed next steps. The group would be interested in a demonstration of the system and see what information is available and a project timeline. The group also had remaining questions about access- resource parents are one of the groups being given priority, and were wondering about parent specialists, attorneys, youth in order to streamline communication and efficiency.

Is there an opportunity to provide feedback in the process?

What is the plan for others outside of OCFS to have access to the system?

### **Father Engagement**

*Libby, Travis and guests of the panel Karen Wyman, Sage Weeks, and Chris Bicknell*

12 fathers have been identified for listening sessions, contact with them is a challenge and the group is brainstorming ways to meet that need with the hope of scheduling an additional listening session before the end of the month.

**11:00 a.m. – Adjourn**

**Next Panel Meeting: Panel Retreat, September 16, 2022**