

**Maine Justice for Children Task Force**  
**March 15, 2022, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

**Welcome** (10:00 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.)—Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill

**Review of December 2021 Minutes** (10:05 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.): Approved

**Interagency Data Assessment Project** (10:10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.) (See attached PowerPoint)

Race and Equity Committee Update: Associate Justice Ellen Gorman & Public Consulting Group

- **Tasks:**
  - Develop, review, and finalize project action plan—completed
  - Conducted literature review on data sharing—completed
  - Develop, review, and finalize interview protocols—completed
  - Identify interview candidates at each agency—completed
  - Schedule and conduct initial interviews—in progress
    - Four separate sets of information: data reporting (exploring how the data we are interested in is collected, maintained, and how it is accessible); data and outcomes wish list (what data would be beneficial?); availability of the data and obstacles to collecting data (both within and outside agency); and, program intersections (what opportunities may exist to share data across case types and between agencies?)
  - Conduct follow-up interviews as required—pending
  - Synthesize information and draft reports—pending
  - Review and revise draft reports—pending
  - Finalize reports and present findings—pending

**Updates** (10:30 – 11:30 a.m.)

- **Maine Supreme Judicial Court**—Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill
  - Mask Update: PPMO-SJC-1, effective Monday, March 14, 2022, no longer requires masks to be worn in the courthouse except for in smaller rooms where a masking requirement is specifically posted. The public is welcome to continue to wear masks and masks will continue to be available from the marshals at entry screening.
  - Inclusion of updates from the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel and the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel: The Justice for Children Task Force is one of the three required Citizen Review Panels under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA. To promote collaboration without duplication, we have invited the other two panels to present at our meetings going forward to update the Justice for Children Task Force members on the other panel activities and processes. A representative from the Justice for Children Task Force will provide similar quarterly updates at the other panel meetings.
  - Changes to MJB personnel: Justice Gorman is retiring, and this will be her last meeting. Deputy Chief Judge Lawrence has been nominated to replace Justice

Gorman on the Supreme Judicial Court. If he is confirmed, he will act as the Family Division liaison.

- **An Organizational Update from the Judicial Branch**—Deputy Chief Judge Rick Lawrence
  - New PC Filings: From January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 11<sup>th</sup>, there have been 159 new PC filings statewide. Last year during the same period, there were 179 new filings. This represents an 11% decrease in new filings.
  - CASA: The Maine CASA Program recently completed training 15 new CASA volunteers.
  - GAL Core Training: The GAL Core Training is scheduled to take place this month from March 28<sup>th</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - 2022 Maine Judicial Branch Child Welfare Conference:
    - The Justice for Children Task Force Training Subcommittee has met to begin planning the 2022 Maine Judicial Branch Child Welfare Conference.
    - One topic for consideration is the effect of the pandemic on the child welfare system.
    - Betsy will be attending the upcoming American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law Conference where one of the tracks available is *Past, Present and Future: The Impact and Implications of COVID-19 for Children and Families*.
    - Sessions include:
      - *Things We Lost During the Pandemic: Safety and Permanency/Well-Being*
      - *Taking the Good from the Bad*
      - *Court Transformation or More of the Same? What Covid Means for the Future of Remote Hearings, Party Participation, Due Process, Case Delays, Stipulations, and ASFA Timelines*
    - The education subcommittee will meet after Betsy returns from the conference to discuss the content.
- **An Organizational Update from the Office of Child and Family Services**—Dr. Todd A. Landry, Director, & Bobbi Johnson, Associate Director (11:00 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.)
  - OCFS continues to move forward on implementing the recommendations from the Casey Family Programs and Collaborative Safety Report from October 2021.
  - Moving forward with Family First implementation, including the founding of some new programs for prevention. The Parents as Teachers expansion has begun.
  - Education about COVID-19 vaccinations continue. Youth in care eligible to be vaccinated are receiving vaccinations at a slightly higher rate than their counterpart population in all of those who receive Maine Care.
- **An Organizational Update from the office of the Attorney General**—Ariel Gannon, Assistant Attorney General, Chief of the Child Protective Division
  - 26 AAGs are handling about 2400 cases. In the process of hiring two new AAGs as a result of Judge Szylyvian’s judicial appointment and the loss of Martha Hallisey-Swift.

- AAGs are providing trainings on variety of topics, including an upcoming training harassment and discrimination training on advocacy in cases that have children with gender dysphoria. Additionally, the AAGs are assisting with training at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.
- AAGs assigned to interagency groups focused on enhancement of information sharing and other topics with the goal of improving the child welfare system.
- **An Organizational Update from the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services—** Justin Andrus, Executive Director
  - Chris Guillory attending in place of Justin. No substantive update from MCILS.
- **A Panel Update from the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel—** Debra Dunlap, Co-Chair, & Ahmen Cabral, Co-Chair (See attached PowerPoint)
  - MCWAP annual report presentation.
  - Citizen Review Panels are governed by federal mandates. MCWAP is one of the citizen review panels required under CAPTA.
  - MCWAP reviews practices of child welfare system in broadest terms.
  - MCWAP is a multidisciplinary panel and all meetings are public.
  - Panel recommendations and OCFS's responses are included in the annual report.
  - Dr. Landry noted that the full report does contain DHHS's responses to recommendations that focused on DHHS.
- **A Panel Update from the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel—** Mark Moran, Co-Chair, & Dr. Amanda Brownell
  - 2020 report issued by the panel comes after a few years of not releasing a report. Recommendations of this panel often happen in real time, and the legislature has not typically asked for a report, but the panel will produce a report going forward.
  - In the last year, the panel has been focusing on how it does its work, who gets information etc.
  - The report did not contain OCFS response, but the collective panels' website contains OCFS's responses to the report.
  - 2021 report is in progress, but its release will depend partly on the legislature's work.
  - Panel Coordinator Kathryn Brice is taking another job within OCFS. The new panel coordinator will be the 11<sup>th</sup> since 2008. The administrative tasks of that position can be taxing.

#### **Strategic Plan Updates (11:30 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.)**

- **Parent Curriculum Workgroup Update:** Kelly Dell'Aquila, Jamie Brooks, and Karen Tompkins
  - The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) is offering a two-hour curriculum that educates parents on the child protection process, parent rights and responsibilities, and the role of different case participants to empower parents to engage and thereby enhance buy-in of case plans and confidence in the process. The curriculum includes video components from stakeholders and an explanation of

the court process, tips for engagement, and resource packets for each participant.

- TOA developed a registration process and a pre/post survey for participants.
- To date, there have been three sessions held with 8 participants from across the state.
- There is a lot of interest to attend from non-system involved individuals who are providing services to families. Therefore, TOA will provide a separate session for only service providers.
- TOA working on improving their marketing strategy to increase registration.

**Miscellaneous** (11:40 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)

- Next meeting: June 14, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

**ADJOURN** (12:00 p.m.)

- Adjourned at 10:57 a.m.