

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

Annual Retreat: September 15, 2023; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Co-Chairs: Ahmen Cabral; Deb Dunlap, Andrea Mancuso

Panel Coordinator: Jenna Joeckel

Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Opening Statement:

Members shared the opening statement

We are a federally mandated group of professionals and private citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging child protective and child welfare responsibilities. The mission of the panel 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. Each of us brings to this table a different set of experiences and opinions. Every voice is valued, and all perspectives are needed. Our shared goal is to promote child safety and quality services for children, youth, and families. This is the task to which we continually commit ourselves, and we hold our relationships in trust.

Members participated in a review of the Federal Mandates.

Welcome and Introductions:

Attendance: Ahmen Cabral, Tammy Roy, Debra Dunlap, Andrea Mancuso, Betsy Boardman, Kelly Dell'Aquila, Senator Donna Bailey, Bobbi Johnson, Julian Richter, Jenna Joeckel, Taylor Kilgore, Abbie Rohde, Amanda Brownell, Chelsea Peters, Jamie Brooks, Michelle Westbrook, Adrienne Carmack

Members were reminded that this meeting is Debra Dunlap's last meeting as panel chair.

9:40 a.m. - Standing Agenda Items

June Minutes: A motion was made to approve the June minutes. 11 Members voted to approve the June minutes and there were none opposed. The June minutes are approved.

The October agenda will include citizen input that was sent to the panel through the Citizen Review Panel Website. It will also include information about the Parent Survey.

The Annual Spurwink Conference is being held on November 1, 2023, and November 2, 2023. The link to register for the conference can be found here: <https://spurwink.org/event/anneccm-2023/>.

The 2023 Nurture Me Summit is being held on October 31, 2023, and November 1, 2023. The link to register for the conference can be found here: <https://web.cvent.com/event/f33acdd4-1c66-48c9-b02e-cf227f338978/summary>.

The panel will have a discussion in October about who will be attending conferences in November and whether the meeting will continue.

The panel reviewed the draft of the MCWAP values statement.

The intent for the values statement is that it will be read at future meetings and that the values will continue to evolve with panel member input. Members shared thoughts and feedback about the values and recommended edits.

Members discussed the format of the meetings and recommended building flex time into the agenda for open dialogue and offering members an opportunity to add agenda items prior to the meeting.

Family Centered Policy & Practice Recommendations

Panel members reviewed and discussed draft recommendations from the Family Centered Policy & Practice subcommittee for potential inclusion in the Annual Report that will be released in January 2024. These included recommendations regarding legal representation for children and youth, data collection and reporting, prevention programming, evaluating and improving policy implementation, and economic supports.

Next Steps: Subcommittee members will reconvene to further work on this recommendation, including discussion of question raised, incorporating some suggested language updates, reviewing additional data. discuss the recommendation further and edit some of the language utilized in the recommendation.

Family Team Meeting Recommendation:

The Panel reviewed and discussed recommendations from the Family Team Meeting subcommittee.

Members suggest the option of adding technical assistance to the recommendation.

Panel Strategic Goal Recommendations

Panel members reviewed and discussed draft recommendations for panel strategic goals from subcommittees. The topics covered included family team meetings, social security benefits, prevention programs, and reporting around the new contingency fund. Subcommittees will discuss feedback provided at today's meeting and will finalize recommendations prior to the October panel meeting.

Panel's Next Steps

Subcommittees will refine their recommendations based on discussion and submit to panel coordinator by the last week in September for an electronic vote after the upcoming panel meeting on 10/06/2023.

Panel members will determine what subcommittees make sense to move work forward throughout the next year and who from OCFS should participate in those subcommittees. Panel members will send ideas and thoughts to the panel coordinator.

OCFS Updates:

Bobbi Johnson, Associate Director of Child Welfare Services with the Office of Child and family Services (OCFS) provided OCFS Updates to the panel. OCFS creates workgroups when policies are revised or created. These work groups include representatives from all levels of OCFS staff, community partners when applicable, and representatives with lived experience. Draft policies are shared with the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel, other relevant stakeholders and OCFS staff for review and feedback prior to finalization. Once a policy is finalized, all staff are required to review the policy and successfully

complete a knowledge check in the OCFS Learning Management System. There are 20-25 legal policies that are still in development. Some date back to the 1980s and are no longer relevant.

Policies completed since January 2023:

Associate Director Johnson reviewed changes/updates to the following policies.

02/24/2023 Resource Home Licensing Policy

03/10/2023 Entry Into Care Policy [NEW]

05/04/2023 Youth Transition Policy

06/05/2023 Child Protection Investigation Policy

07/10/2023 Missing and Runaway Youth Policy

08/04/2023 Domestic Abuse and Violence Policy

08/08/2023 Indian Child Welfare Policy

AD Johnson shared information about the Opioid Prevention and Treatment Funds including the RFP Process for Clinical Consultants that will be working with OCFS staff to provide support to families, caseworkers, and level of care assessments. The clinical consultants will hold space in all district offices. OCFS is also hiring peer recovery coaches that have lived experience with substance use disorder (SUD) and child welfare. A pilot project will begin with 3 recovery courts and OCFS will be partnering with the University of Southern Maine to ensure staff in these roles are adequately supported and connected. They will receive supervision through the Maine re-entry network.

[L.D. 474](#) was approved and is in the process of being implemented. Some of the information is being built into the mandated reporting curriculum and will include doctor's offices.

The Panel adjourned at 3pm.

Next Panel Meeting: October 6, 2023, 9a.m. -11a.m.