

# CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL

## December 1, 2021 Meeting Discussion Highlights

(Note: Due to the Pandemic, the meeting was Virtual, through Zoom technology.)

**Present:** Vance Raye, Co-Chair; Mark Ghaly, Co-Chair; Sarah Belton; Ken Berrick; Sheila Boxley; Dana Blackwell; Stacy Boulware Eurie; Sanja Bugay; Bobby Cagle; Roger DeLeon; Leonard Edwards; Janay Eustace; Larry Fluharty; Bob Friend; Leticia Galyean; Patrick Gardner; Leslie Heimov; Kathryn Icenhower; Kimberley Johnson; Karen Larsen; Sharon Lawrence; Michael Olenick; Amy Price; Dan Prince; Trent Rhorer; Cherie Schroeder; Shawna Schwarz; Cathy Senderling; Chris Stoner-Mertz; Lindsay Tornatore; Debra Silverman; Daniel Webster; Jevon Wilkes

**Absent:** Nancy Bargmann; Heather Bowlds; Isaac Bryan, Ebony Chambers; Douglas Hatchimonji; Martin Hoshino; Melissa Hurtado; Deborah Kelch; Brian Maienschein; Aubrey Manuel; Cheryl Rave; Vaneshia Reed; Terry Rooney; Susan Rubio; Sarah Tyson; Leecia Welch

### **Call to Order and Introductions (Sixth Zoom Meeting for CWC)**

Staff noted that the meeting was going to be recorded. The meeting was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Justice Vance Raye, Co-Chair of the Child Welfare Council. He personally welcomed councilmembers and members of the public, he then welcomed Secretary Mark Ghaly, Co-Chair of the Child Welfare Council and explained he was joining the meeting by phone. Secretary Ghaly explained that he would only attend a portion of the meeting due to a conflict with the Governor and that Director Kim Johnson will be taking over for him as Co-Chair for the remainder of the meeting. He introduced and welcomed new members to the council: Isaac Bryan, Assembly Member, District 54; Brian Maienschien, Assembly Member District 77; Bob Friend, Director, National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness; Leticia Galyean, Chief Executive Officer, Seneca Center; and Larry Fluharty, Department of Social Services, Ombudsman, Foster Care.

Secretary Ghaly talked about wanting to have the Council go into the next year focusing on some deep policy issues that would be immediately relevant to the states actions and movements moving forward. He introduced a topic that would hopefully be kicked off in the next meeting with the four quarterly meetings in 2022 all galvanized around the single theme of supporting kids being with their families. Each of the four meetings would be spent on a different topic relevant to this concept. Each meeting would have presentations and facilitated discussion around topics such as family finding, the role of the courts, ideas about engaging the paternal family members and fathers. Additional information will be shared at a later time.

## i. Approval of the September 8, 2021 Discussion Highlights (Informational Item)

Justice Vance Raye directed Council Members to the Discussion Highlights document that had been posted and sent to them prior to the meeting. He asked for comments, and/or suggested revisions from the Council and the public. There being none, he called for a consensus vote. In the absence of any revisions or comments, the highlights were approved.

## ii. Best Practice Guide for Developing a District System to Improve Education Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care (Informational Item)

Justice Raye called on Aliana Moonves-Leb, Senior Staff Attorney at the Alliance for Children’s Rights and Mark Rodgers, Senior Director of Student Services of Bonita Unified School District to present on their best practice guide. This is a continuation of work from the early days of the Child Development and Successful Youth Transitions Committee. That Committee was on hiatus and therefore the steering committee reviewed the best practice guide and allowed the Alliance for Children’s Rights to use the Child Welfare Council logo on the best practice guide. Councilmembers can ask questions after the presentation. Because the agenda is very full, Justice Raye asked members of the public to reserve their questions and comments until it is time for public comment or to utilize the Zoom chat feature to make any comments or ask questions. Councilmember Trent Rohrer expressed his gratitude for the report/presentation and shared that it will help the San Francisco School District. Councilmember Michael Olenick wanted to know if the issue about getting kids from one school district to another in regard to vaccinations and medical records was addressed in the report. Councilmember Chris Stoner-Mertz had a comment regarding the youth that had a great deal of movement and need intensive behavioral health services within an STRTP. These settings do not always include education as part of the interagency placement committee process and Chris Stoner-Mertz was wondering if that is something that was addressed in this report.

### iii. Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Implementation- Part IV: Follow up discussion from the September meeting (Informational Item)

Nick Picinich, on Secretary Ghaly's behalf, introduced Angie Schwartz, Deputy Director of the California Department of Social Services to present an update on how Part IV of the Family First Prevention Services Act is being implemented in California. The Department of Social Services, Department of Behavioral Health, and Judicial Council have all been participating in weekly or monthly technical assistance calls or drop-in sessions. Councilmember Bob Friend had a comment that given the directive of Secretary Ghaly to focus on how we keep children with their families for 2022, can there be a review/highlight of the opportunities and requirements for parent, youth and family network to voice their input on the plan that ultimately involves all of this system collaboration that could potentially leads to congregate care.

### iv. Presentation on California's implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act- Part 1 (Information Item)

Justice Raye called on Angie Schwartz, Deputy Director of the California Department of Social Services to present on California's plan to implement Part 1 of FFPSA in California. California did submit its plan to the Federal Government, and Angie discussed where we are in that process. Councilmember Kathy Icenhower clarified that if an EBP is billable under Medicaid, that is what is done first. A large part of the home visiting services in California are billable under Medicaid/Medi-Cal and the concern is that in California these services are grant-funded which, based on this, means these services would have to be transitioned to Medicaid billable services. There is concern that there has not been any movement in that direction. Councilmember Debi Silverman asked how many counties submitted a letter of intent for the FFPSA Part 1 funds and what is the state doing to support counties that may have less capacity to develop a plan.

## v. Presentation of Prevention and Early Intervention Committee's FFPSA Implementation Recommendations- Part 1 (Information Item)

Director Kim Johnson, on behalf of Secretary Ghaly, calls on Kathy Icenhower and Dana Blackwell (filling in for David Swanson Hollinger), co-chairs of the Prevention and Early Intervention committee, to present the PEI committees recommendations. These recommendations were developed at the request of CDSS.

Councilmember Libby Sanchez noted that in the list of diverse stakeholders, child welfare services social workers were not included and it's very important to include them in the conversation since they play an integral role in child welfare services. Secondly, outcomes of disparity were mentioned, but it did not reference investigation of the causes of disparity. Both are very important in how best to reduce disparate treatment and outcomes of black and brown children in the system.

Councilmember Amy Price commented that if the Council wants to hear from those who have experienced and in many cases been harmed by the system, there needs to be meetings that are accessible to those individuals and provide mechanisms for them to be able to participate in a meaningful way. There is a growing movement in California of organizations and people who have actual experience with the child welfare system and are coming together to make recommendations on how to make the system better. This would be a great opportunity for the Council to partner with that group, obtain their insight and perspectives in an effort to strengthen the work.

Councilmember Debi Silverman made a comment that First 5 CA has set aside funding to support evaluation of home visitations and in-home prevention services for families with children prenatal through age five. While programs responding to this survey are not guaranteed funding for evaluation, First 5 CA will identify potential programs for evaluation support based, in part, on responses submitted to this survey. Programs for which First 5 CA may provide support include those seeking funding to expand an evaluation already underway to ensure it meets IV-E Clearinghouse standards and to those who need an evaluator (designated by First 5 CA) to conduct an evaluation to demonstrate effectiveness using IV-E Clearinghouse standards.

## vi. Presentation of Behavioral Health Committee Universal Service Array (Information Item)

Justice Raye calls on Karen Larsen, current co-chair of the Behavioral Health Committee, and Ken Berrick, former co-chair of the Behavioral Health Committee to present on the Universal Array of Services for Child Welfare Involved Youth and Youth at Imminent Risk of Involvement which is a continuation of the recommendations adopted earlier this year. Ken Berrick also presented the new chair, Chris Stoner-Mertz, Executive Director, CA Alliance of Child and Family Services. Councilmember Patrick Gardner commented a concern that the standards notion which is the core message in this report is both necessary and essential for building a system of care for children in California as funds are insufficient to do all the things that are wanted. This suggests the standards are contingent on adequate funding. Given that all the children that the child welfare system deals with and that this document focuses on those that are MediCal eligible, the idea that we would have that caveat or suggestion may be an appropriate stance is problematic. Administrative standards should also be added in the document. They are essential components of service.

## vii. Committee and Task Force Updates

Justice Raye called for committee/task force updates, which primarily focused on what would be discussed at the afternoon meetings. He thanked the Committee chairs for their reports.

## viii. VII. Public Comment and Adjournment to Committee Meetings

Justice Raye asked for any comments from the members of the public and noted that conference lines, Zoom line numbers and links for the afternoon committee meetings are on the agenda. Justice Raye thanked Bobby Cagle and Ken Berrick for their service. Ken stepped down from Seneca and Bobby Cagle is stepping down as LA's Child Welfare Director at the end of the year.

Justice Raye thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and closed the meeting

Meeting adjourned at 12:33 pm.