

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Oversight Board Board Meeting Record

Thursday, September 19, 2019 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., The 2100 Building – Olympia, WA

Member Attendance: Annie Blackledge, Annie Lee, Bobbe Bridge, Charles Loeffler, Frank Cuthbertson (via phone), Lois Martin, Shrounda Selivanoff, Sydney Forrester, Tana Senn, Tom Dent, Wendy Thomas (via phone)

Staff in Attendance: Crista Johnson (*Executive Director*), Nickolaus Colgan (*Administrative Coordinator*)

Public in Attendance: Kris Sanborn, *YMCA*, Jon Gould, *Children's Alliance*, Deanna Stewart, *Department of Children, Youth, and Families*, Diana Carlen, *foster parent*, Dani Turk, *community member*, Jill May, *Washington Association for Children & Families*, Laurie Lippold, *Partners for Our Children*, Alison Mendiola, *Senate Human Services Committee*, Jim Theofelis, *A Way Home Washington*, Stacia Hollar, *Attorney General's Office* (via phone)

Welcome and Opening Remarks & Approval of August 15 Meeting Minutes | *Action: meeting minutes were approved led by Crista Johnson and co-chairs*

The meeting was called into order at 10:07 a.m. Bobbe Bridge made a motion to approve the August 15 meeting minutes and Shrounda Selivanoff seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Crista Johnson recommended that a “literacy moment” be added to the Board’s Shared Values. This would create a safe space and allow any member to request an explanation of something during the meeting that they did not understand. Moving forward, the Board’s Shared Values will be available at every meeting as a living document. Board members are encouraged to request changes or additions to the Shared Values.

Board staff announced they are text accessible and encouraged members to text them if that is more convenient than email or phone calls: Crista 360-867-8208 or Nickolaus 360-764-0702.

Board staff encouraged all Board members to share relevant event information with them if there is an interest to share with the entire Board or to have Board staff attend as representatives of the Board.

DCYF Communication Strategy, Debra Johnson, Director of Communications

Debra Johnson outlined DCYF’s current communication plan which encompasses the department’s three primary goals of communication: (1) Provide relevant information; (2) Create the narrative of DCYF as a new department; and (3) Define the department’s message.

Debra emphasized DCYF’s choice of language to focus on “culture development” instead of “culture change.” Debra also reviewed the different communication tools the department uses and how the department works to make information to families, providers and the general public more accessible.

The DCYF communications team has eight staff members serving over 4,500 DCYF employees. The communications team spoke to the struggles of defining change and how to communicate that both internally and externally. They also spoke to identified areas to improve upon, such as the timeliness of communication when legislation, rule or policy changes are being implemented.

Board members acknowledged that while DCYF is making a good effort with their current resources, there is still a large portion of the public who have not been appropriately informed about legislation, rules, and policy changes. If people don't know which newsletters to sign up for they may not receive necessary information. DCYF is hoping to improve upon this by looking at different methods and avenues for getting information out to targeted audiences in a timely manner.

Public Comment

Laurie Lippold, *Partners for Our Children*, Laurie's first comment was regarding the review and follow up process for implementing RCW, WAC and policy changes. She requested that the Board's subcommittees review laws relating to their subcommittee focus areas, and assess the implementation status for all law, rule and policy changes. Laurie then responded to Debra Johnson's presentation stating that she struggled to find items on the website and suggested that the layout be looked at, but complimented Debra's team on their responsiveness to her emails for help. Laurie also expressed excitement about the Board's October agenda focused on culture change.

Diana Carlen, *foster parent*, Debra, in her personal citizen capacity as a foster parent, is very interested in the work the Board is doing stating she is very passionate about foster care. Diana wants to make sure that DCYF is more accountable to everyone in their system. Specifically, a way for bio parents and foster parents to have easier access to their representatives at the agency. Debra expressed frustration that in order to get work done and champion her foster children is to either file a lawsuit or work with the Office of the Children and Family Ombuds. She would like to see consideration of legislation that aims to improve the timeliness accountability for the department when it is contempt for not providing visitation services for incarcerated parents. She also would like further transparency from DCYF on their internal controls and requested the Board be briefed on this in the future. Additionally, she suggested the Board provide further outreach when traveling around the state so that more parent representatives can attend.

Working Lunch: Diverse Membership Engagement

The working lunch revolved around discussing how to engage Board members of different cultures, backgrounds and generations. Tana Senn, co-chair, addressed some personnel issues regarding membership, recent changes to membership and let everyone know that there are currently four open positions on the board: *law enforcement representative, foster parent representative, one current or former foster youth under age twenty-five, and one individual under age twenty-five with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system.*

Staff proposed to research the cost of contracting with an organization who can help to remove barriers to full youth participation and engagement in meetings, including providing upfront financial support, as well as support preparing for meetings and engagement during meetings. Board members requested the staff consider as much flexibility as possible as in who could fulfill the role of the support person to the youth.

Board members in attendance agreed with this proposal. Annie Blackledge, Annie Lee and Frank Cuthbertson volunteered to work with staff to draft a job description for the support role to a youth member.

Annie L. and Shrounda requested further discussion and assessment of Board processes for handling personnel issues.

Individual Review: DCYF Oversight Board Draft Annual Legislative Report

Board members received copies of the draft legislative report template and took time to review it before having a group discussion. Objectives for this meeting were to consider the proposed sections of the report and to reflect on the overall tone and content the Board members would like to see in the first annual report.

Large Group: Feedback Session for Draft Legislative Report

The Board provided feedback to staff on topics, missing information, dislikes, and edits to add or remove content from the draft report template. Staff will incorporate these edits and send them back to the Board for review prior to the October meeting.

The Board agreed that the report will respond directly to the Board's statutory requirements, contextualize where the Board is at in its work in parallel to the formation of DCYF, and to humanize the work for the Board and DCYF by keeping the vision of the new department central to the report.

Co-chair Tana Senn has requested Board members to do two pieces of homework prior to the next Board meeting, and to share their deliverables with Board staff to be incorporated into the next version of the report to be reviewed during the October meeting:

Homework #1: Every Board member to write a visionary statement to include in the report. In other words, for each Board member, what would the ideal DCYF look like? These quotes may be incorporated throughout the annual report.

Homework #2: Every Board member to write their recommendations – at the oversight level, not too detailed or specific - to the department to achieve the vision described in the Homework #1 deliverable. These will be brought together for the Board to discuss as a whole.

Next Steps for Report & Future Meeting Planning

The October meeting will focus on culture change with a presentation by DCYF's Director of Organizational Change Management, Annie Severson, and the Board engaging in a facilitated activity to define the Board's vision of culture change as intended in HB 1661 (2017). Additionally, the Board will review the next iteration of the draft annual legislative report.

Adjourned at 3:03 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2019