



Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

The mission of the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee is to provide oversight for and promote communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services and its related agencies, and the community, with emphasis on providing information and recommendations that make the system more effective and efficient.

MINUTES

January 3, 2024

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting held in-person for Committee Members and public.
Virtual option via Microsoft Teams for public only.

I. Call to order and introductions.

Rosemary

- Meeting called to order by Committee Chair, Rosemary Alanis, at 9:07 AM with roll call by DSS Staff Support, Julia Perez.

II. Approve Minutes for December 6, 2023 and January 3, 2024 Agenda.

- Supervisor Sal Quintero motioned; Wilma Hashimoto (District 5) seconded to approve the December 2023 Minutes and January 2024 Agenda.

III. Updates

A. Receive Report From Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas

Dalvin

- Committee reviewed the Child Welfare Services (CWS) Data. Child Welfare Services Deputy Director, Dalvin Baker, highlighted an update to the Leave of Absences (LOAs). He explained the LOAs are now included on the data that demonstrates vacancies.
- Referring to a previous question on FURS data, Dalvin clarified that *Average Mobile Response Times* are measured in minutes. He explained the FURS contract states that for any urgent calls received on the FURS Hotline, response time needs to be between 1 hour and 3 hours. According to the FURS data, the average response time is within that timeframe.
- MOD C Data presentation was supposed to be given by Supervisor Megan Lambert but is out ill. Megan will present the Mod C Data in the February 2024 meeting.
- Child Welfare Services Deputy Director, Cathi Huerta, briefly discussed what the Mod C data entails. Cathi said staff have begun tracking every child that comes into Mod C. They have also been tracking recidivism, where they are going, where they came from and how long youth spend at Mod C.
- Committee Vice-Chair, Ed Avila, asked what is meant by “reentry rate into Mod C” on the Mod C Data. Cathi clarified that it is a rate based on how many times youth return to Mod C. The rate for returning 1 time is 73%, for 2 times it is 14%, etc.
- District 1 Committee member, Karina Perez, asked if there is a long-term plan for a permanent location for Mod C since the current building it is located at was recently purchased. Dalvin responded that the Department has not identified a space for Mod C, but they are actively searching. Cathi mentioned Social Services Director spoke of a plan to close Mod C in December 2025 if all CWS work involving complex needs youth is completed.
- District 2 Committee member, Kevin Lisitsin asked if the Department has ever considered having a home-like setting to place youth. Dalvin responded that this is actively discussed in the Child Well-Being Continuum. The plan is to have Divisions Chiefs and staff attend these meetings to present the work being done in Child Welfare. Megan will kick this off in February as she presents on Mod-C data.
- District 5 Committee member, Pam Hancock, believes data does not provide the whole story. She would like to hear from the youth themselves. DSS can look into that.
- Supervisor Quintero told Kevin that about a year ago, the Board of Supervisors were approached by a couple of companies interested in building houses for foster youth who wanted to continue their education, but the proposals that were received were not within Fresno County’s budget.
- Board Assistant, Rocky Vang, asked what is meant by “unique entries” on the Mod C data. Cathi responded that “unique entries” is referring to the number of unduplicated youth.
- Regarding the Social Worker and Social Worker Practitioners vacancy rates, Dalvin received updated information from Personnel and the current vacancy rate is 5% as of January 2, 2024. Last year’s vacancy rate was at 14% around the same time. The decrease in rate can be attributed to increasing recruitment efforts.

B. Recap of FCSOC 2022-2023 Annual Report BOS Presentation

Wilma/Pam

- The Annual report was well-received at the December 12th, 2023 BOS Meeting.
- Goal to recruit Resource Parents and Social Workers by a County-wide campaign was presented.
- Wilma reiterated that Committee support for pay increase was verbally brought up at the BOS Meeting. Pam recommended that this should be documented on the next annual report, even though the Committee cannot be involved with the decision making regarding this issue.

C. Splash Day at Wild Water Park for Children in Foster Care

- Last year, CASA hosted around 500-800 foster youth from Merced County to Kern County for the Splash Day event. There is a tentative agreement to continue with that event on May 23rd, 2024. More information will be provided later.
- Wilma was also able to obtain free zoo tickets through the Access for All partnership with the Chaffee Zoo.

IV. New Business

A. Continued Discussion on DSS Employee Survey

Rosemary

- Rosemary wanted to touch base on this topic because she feels this is an important issue to revisit. The subcommittee who created the survey thinks it would be a good idea to revisit the progress that has been done regarding the survey results to see if further support from the Committee is needed. A future date can be set with DSS to discuss progress.
- The Kashian Family Foundation will host a thank you event for the DSS Employees who participated in the DSS Employee Survey. Date for event is still to be decided, it will be hosted at the DSS Hope Plaza.
- Dalvin thinks the event would be a good introduction to the FCSOC Meeting because some employees do not know what it is.

B. Discuss Meeting Location for February, March, and April 2024

Julia

- Support Staff, Julia Perez, announced that the Hope Center will not be available for the February, March, and April meetings. These meetings will be held at the DSS Administration Building (Building 2) located on Villa behind Building 5. Information will be sent out.

C. Discuss Dates for Next FCSOC Retreat

Rosemary

- Rosemary requested retreat date options from the Committee. It was decided that a couple of dates will be presented by Rosemary at the February 2024 meeting, and then voted on to remain Brown Act compliant.

V. Subcommittee Update

A. Education

Pam

- Pam updated the Committee on graduation rates. 80% for non-foster population and about 30% less for the foster population. Moving is one of the main reasons why foster youth have a lower graduation rate.
- Work continues between DSS and Education to improve the ward of the court letter process needed to complete the financial aid applications for college.
- Looking into working with other resources to provide transportation to not only foster youth, but other members of the community who do not have access to transportation.
- Education Rights Holders are not involved in the school changes decision making, so the Education subcommittee is working on getting more individuals to have a say in the matter.
- Ed asked how many foster youths are attending school on a regular basis, what are the failure rates at high school graduations and is there a liaison that monitors the situation. Pam responded that every single charter and school district has a trained Foster Youth Educational Liaison. Pam mentioned that it is usually difficult to identify children that are in foster care due to them constantly being moved around, but this issue is actively being looked into in the Foster Network Improvement Community (NIC). Failure rates are high. Graduation rates for foster youth are at 53%, which has not improved much over the last 20 years. While the numbers haven't improved much, there are a lot of efforts that are taking place to improve this.
- Ed asked who connects with the youth in group homes and how do they connect. When he has spoken to youth, it seems the individuals who run the group homes do not prioritize forming a connection with foster youth or ensuring the youth are successful in school.
- Cathi commented that there needs to be an emphasis on early education and reading literacy.
- Wilma mentioned a Literacy Program that is available at McLane, Edison, and Fresno High School. Wilma can provide an update of the pilot program results in May.
- CASA has opened a satellite office for all current and former foster youth that assists with employment and housing. This is located at the City Center.

B. Children’s Mental Health

Kevin

- Last Children’s Mental Health Meeting had a presentation from Youthful Service Partnerships, which is a program that assists with self-care, school functioning and family relationships. There was great conversation on how the program can be tailored to be more proactive.
- Next Children’s Mental Health meeting will be held on Thursday, February 22, 2024.

VI. Announcements

- Wilma announced that CASA Strategic Planning will begin soon. An invitation with further details will be provided.
- Supervisor Quintero announced that around 600 clothing items were collected for the Coat Drive. Various agencies were very thankful for the items received.
- Pam announced that there will be an End of the Year Student Recognition Celebration at Scout Island on Friday May 3rd. Invitations will be provided later.

VII. Adjourn

- Next meeting will be held Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 9:00am in-person for Committee members and the public. Virtual option via Microsoft Teams, for members of the public only. Please note: FCSOC meetings require in-person attendance in order to participate. Virtual option is view-only. Meeting adjourned by Rosemary at 10:21 AM.

Committee Attendance

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sal Quintero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ari Martinez (Proxy)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karina Perez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Lisitsin	<input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Thomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	Vacant	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	Vacant	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto

* Marked Boxes Indicate Committee Member Attended

Attending Staff and Guests

In Person: Dalvin Baker, Cathi Huerta, Julia Perez, Hillary Bolger, J’Lyne Montejano, Brian Van Anne, Amina Flores-Becker, Rocky Vang, Chad Valorosi